

Support for S.B. 972

Dear Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

My son, whom I surrendered for adoption in 1966, and I met again in 1985 when he was nineteen. We have a strong relationship and I am grandmother to his four children and great grandmother to his four grandchildren. I wrote a book about our experience, *The Other Mother: A Woman's Love for the Child She Gave Up for Adoption* (Soho Press, 1991), which NBC produced as a television movie in 1995. Because of both the book and the movie and from speaking at numerous adoption conferences in the United States, Canada and Italy I have met with thousands of birth/first parents, adoptees and adopted parents, and above all I learned from them is that the truth does set you free.

Every adopted person deserves the right to know their origins, their health history and their story - in fact, without such essential information it is difficult to be a whole person. Even people never separated from their original family feel more fulfilled when they seek out their ancestry, as the success of Ancestry.com has proven without a doubt. Imagine not knowing anything about your origins. Over the decades, it has been proven time and time again that well over 90% of birth/first mothers want to know their child. Who is really protected by sealed records is the adoptive family, but it must be understood that there is enough love for everyone. Adopted people had no say in their adoption and so should have every right to choose whether or not to know their family of origin.

I believe the government should not be in the business of legislating relationships, which in effect it does when laws prevent people from knowing each other, and that individuals are the only ones responsible for their own lives. I would hate to think of all I would have lost if I had never been able to meet my son. My son feels we have only enriched his life and he certainly has enriched ours.

Yours sincerely:

Carol Schaefer

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