

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a birthmother to express my full support of Senate Bill 972, which will allow adult adoptees to access their original birth certificates.

I relinquished my daughter in 1968 when the stigma of pregnancy out of wedlock was so extreme that most parents forced or manipulated their young daughters to “give away” their children at birth. Many of us were hidden away in maternity homes, sent to stay with relatives in another state, or as in my case, put in a small apartment across town and told to stay away from family gatherings lest others find out.

I say this to tell you that the secret was never mine – it was my parents shame that created the secret. I think that was the case for many.

I was never promised anything by the Infant of Prague Adoption Agency. My weekly “counseling” sessions with them were my only social activity and they worked hard to convince me that I was doing a noble and unselfish thing and that a young married and established couple would give my daughter a life I never could as a teenager barely out of high school. They did not tell me that I would suffer deep regret, spend years wondering if my daughter was even alive, and that I would not go on to marry and have other children.

I saw my daughter for the first time when she was 21. I had written to the adoption agency to try to get information to my daughter that my sister and I both suffered from narrow angle glaucoma and that she should get checked. They said they could not but as it turned out the adoptive mother was a volunteer there and through some process found out. She was receptive and my daughter eventually agreed to meet me. By the way, she did get checked and does in fact have glaucoma. I was lucky that someone at that agency had the power to connect us. Most adoptees have no such opportunity. Their records are sealed and they cannot legally find out anything about their origin.

It has been over 30 years now since we met and although our relationship isn't a close one, I believe it provided both of us and end to wondering, and for her an understanding of where some of her traits and talents come from, the knowledge that she wasn't “abandoned” as she had always felt, and provided a great healing for each of us.

I suppose it is possible that there are birthmothers who don't want to be contacted but I have yet to meet one. Even if there are, my belief is that an adult adoptee's right to their own history outweighs any vague promise of perpetual secrecy by a social worker. I hope you will support this legislation.

Thank you,

Barbara Sinclair