

Testimony in support of Connecticut SB 972

Dear Esteemed Members of the Connecticut Legislature,

I am a filmmaker and author and have spent the past three decades writing books and making films about adoptees and their need (and right) to their own original birth certificate. I have witnessed the enactment of access legislation across the country and filmed the fight for it in California, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio and Rhode Island. Two of my feature films have been on PBS, and Governor Christie in New Jersey credited my short films with helping him to vote 'yes' on the NJ adoptee birthright legislation that went into effect January 2017.

The 'experiment' of providing access, and the initial fears of the impact of such legislation, is over and the results are in. Access legislation has been a win/win for the citizens in states that have had the courage to reverse sealed records laws, and it has reflected very positively on those legislators who have voted for passage.

I make an effort to provide both pros and cons of this issue - but I have had difficulty in finding the 'cons'. Yes, this is complicated and emotional. But the horror stories just aren't 'out there'. If they were, I would include them.

For folks opposed to government interference in personal lives, I can think of no greater interference than sealed records policies. States mandated that adopted citizens would have no right to know anything about their birth - ever. I have filmed 90-year-olds who are told they have no right to this information. *No right to their own birth certificate*. It's shameful - and harmful. This is NOT about providing a tool for search and reunion. This is about equality - about treating adopted citizens the same as non-adopted citizens.

I have a free film channel online which houses 53 of my films: www.vimeo.com/channels/adopteefilmchannel. Three shorts I recommend are:

Adoptive Parents: <https://vimeo.com/205759400>

Four Birthmothers: <https://vimeo.com/119964199>

OHIO: Open Mic: <https://vimeo.com/157030968>

These films say more than I ever could about why HB 5408 should move forward. Connecticut has an opportunity to do something that will help so many people - with very little, if any cost. I strongly encourage you to give this legislation your endorsement. Its the right thing to do.

Most Sincerely,

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