

To Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

I am an adult adoptee who has been deprived of my right to know my family history simply because I cannot access my birth certificate in the State of Connecticut. Imagine going to your physician and being told that you have a serious medical condition and then being asked whether you are aware of it occurring in your family, only to have to reply that you don't know because you are a State of Connecticut adoptee who happened to be born before 1983. I, for example, suffer from a cardiac condition that might be better treated if my family medical history were available to me. I also have degenerative hearing loss that could be treated differently if it were known that it is a genetic condition. My doctors have told me that having knowledge of my genetic medical history would make a significant difference in my medical treatment.

Also, there is the emotional aspect of not knowing my "place" in the world. I look at my wife's family both here and in Europe where we have traced her family and met them, and I can see the family resemblances and characteristics that make a family, a family - simple things like their eyes and their mannerisms. I look at myself and I see no one that resembles me. People are prone in casual conversation to ask about family history. I either have to lie and pretend that the ethnic heritage of my adoptive parents is really my heritage as well, or I have to divulge that I am adopted and don't know my heritage, which is something I don't necessarily want to be discussing at just any social gathering.

1983 is such an arbitrary date. It creates two classes of adoptees. The parents, aunts and uncles of the pre-1983 class are the ones that are dying off every day. Each day it gets less and less likely that even if this arbitrary law is changed, my chances of meeting, or even learning, much about my birth parents lessens. I'm 62 years old. At least give me the opportunity of possibly locating some siblings and learning something about my birth parents and family history.

It's time to stop punishing us for something we played no part in. All adult adoptees in the State of Connecticut should be entitled to access their original birth records. I urge you to support and pass Senate Bill 972 : The 2019 Adoptee Rights Bill and correct the discriminatory law that currently is in place.

Sincerely,

James Uhrig