

Support for S.B. 972

Members of the Planning & Development Committee."

Today I voice my support of Senate Bill 972. I write this testimony for thousands of women who are unaware of this bill or don't feel they have the right to speak out having been told they were relinquishing all rights to parenthood when they placed their child for adoption. I am in a position to voice my support as I am an adoptee, a biological birthmother, and an adoptive parent.

Connecticut's long time closed records policy supports secrets, shame and guilt for both parties. Now is the time to become larger than before and open your hearts and legal avenues to instead support truth, pride and self-esteem by supporting Senate Bill 972.

I understand the position of those who propose a Registry as a solution to the issue, however a Registry often promotes false hope and increased anxiety on both sides. Waiting and not knowing is painful!

As an adoptee I wanted to know my biological heritage, medical history and who I looked like, where I got certain traits from and why I was given. I was born in the state of New York and contacted their registry. Like registries in so many states BOTH parties must register in order for records to be opened. After many years of searching and detective work I was reunited with my birthmother who was 77 years old. She had dreamed and prayed that before she died she would get to know if I had had a good life and that her decision to relinquish me had been a good one. It took her a few years after we met for her to "come out" and begin telling friends but once she did she said, "It was so freeing to finally talk about it. I was so ashamed and now I can walk with my head high." I was fortunate to have a relationship with her for 18 years.

I definitely identified with her dreams and prayers as I too wanted to know if I had made the right decision for the child I relinquished to adoption and that he had been loved and well cared for. I had birthed and relinquished him in the state of Connecticut therefore he wouldn't have an avenue to find me should he desire. *Again, I must voice my opposition to a registry that requires both parties to register being the avenue to birth records.* This proposal falls short of meeting the needs of both parties! The long and short of my story is that I searched for my son and through more detective work was successful in finding him. Respectfully I had a third party make the initial contact giving him the option of talking with me or not. Again I was fortunate and we have now known each other for six years and our relationship deepens with each encounter.

I am also an adoptive parent who's child was born in a state with closed records. She too searched and found her birth family regretting not having done it sooner as her biological mother is deceased, however she has a relationship with her half-siblings. It was imperative to her that she know her family medical history beyond what was relayed to us at the time of adoption.

On behalf of all the adoptees, birthmothers, birthfathers, birth grandparents, siblings, aunts, and uncles connected to relinquishment and adoption I strongly urge you to search your consciences, put secrets, shame and guilt in the past and do the right thing by voting in favor of Senate Bill 972. You will be proud you did.

Sincerely, Carol Welsh