

February 17, 2020

Dear Members of the Planning & Development Committee,

I am writing you today to voice my support of S.B. 113. I am an adult adoptee who was born in Norwalk, CT and was fortunate to have been adopted at age 6 months by two wonderful people who provided me with a loving, stable, and happy home. These two people were my parents in every sense of the word and I feel blessed to have had them. They adopted me through Children's Services of Connecticut, Inc. in Hartford, CT (now The Village for Families & Children, Inc.)

With that being said, I always had a natural curiosity about my birth parents but as I got older (I am now 53 years old) I especially wanted to know my medical history. It is my human and civil right to have access to this information and it is too important in my life and for that of my children. As the saying goes, knowledge is power and I thought if I had access to my medical history, I would be in a position to better manage the decisions I make regarding my health.

As luck would have it, I found my birthmother in August of 2017. To make a long story short, I took a DNA test which resulted in a second cousin match. It only took me about 72 hours of some digging but I was able to get an email address and she wrote back right away. She was thrilled and we met in September that year along with two half-sisters. Needless to say, it was all very overwhelming but I am most fortunate that it she is happy (as is her family) about my existence. She also gave me my birth father's name and has

given me as much medical history as she knows. I cannot explain in words how overjoyed I am to be able to say that for the first time in my life, I am able to make educated decisions about my health that I wasn't able to do before. I found out that I have heart disease in my family and that knowledge is invaluable.

Getting back to finding her through a DNA test, fortunately, I did not have to expose her identity to the 2nd cousin match but I can certainly see why that is a real concern and one of the many reasons why it is so important that adoptees get the right to their original birth certificate. Through these DNA tests, people are finding their birth parents but in a very roundabout way. It would have been more private for her and I if had my birth certificate with her name on it as it would not have risked other biological relatives finding out through DNA testing. However, I was very careful and felt the need to protect her identity along the way. She did the right thing back in 1966 and I did not want to penalize her or risk the relationship she has with her family. Through the email, I was able to contact her directly without anyone else knowing. That way she was able to speak with her family about it on her own terms. She told me my adoption was never a secret with her family but it had been many years since it was discussed.

Even though I now have my own information I would still like the law to stop discriminating against adoptees. I was truly very fortunate that finding my birth mother only took me a few days. There are people who have taken DNA tests who have been searching for birth parents for many years without success. Thankfully, my birth mother is still alive and in good enough health to be able to give me the health information I wanted and rightfully deserved to have. With OBC access, precious months and years can be saved before that

generation of birth parents passes away or develops memory issues. I am, therefore, still 100% in support of this effort and am praying that 2020 is the year this Bill finally gets passed!

Please support S.B. 113 to allow adult adoptees born before October 1, 1983 access to their original birth certificates. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions at (860) 916-8316 or via email at daug6978@sbcglobal.net

Sincerely,

Diane Augustus

Naples, FL & Vernon, CT