

Hello,

I would like to respectfully urge you to support and pass SB 113 which allows adult adoptees to access their original birth certificates (OBCs)

My position reflects my status as an adult adoptee whose OBC and other records were sealed under state statutes for "closed" adoptions in the 1960s. Until the laws were amended in the state of my birth (Tennessee) I was denied a basic right, which is granted to all other US citizens, to have access to records containing my most personal information - the record of my birth. One of the arguments used to sustain closed records is to protect the "privacy" that was supposedly guaranteed to birth parents upon relinquishing a child for adoption. However I maintain that:

1. This is not a right that can be guaranteed to anyone - there is nothing in the Constitution compelling states to permanently obscure the evidence of someone's regrettable actions, and especially not when doing so would infringe upon the rights of another person, namely the adoptee in question.
2. Even if such a guarantee was expressly made or implied between the state and a birth parent, the adoptee had no part in any such agreement made ON OUR BEHALF and WITHOUT OUR CONSENT. As an adoptee, I feel that I am not bound by the terms of an agreement made concerning my most personal, private documentation in which I had no say in the matter. Rather, I believe I should be guaranteed the same rights as every other American to have full access to my personal OBC.
3. Regardless of whether some birth mothers expect a guarantee of perpetually sealed records, studies have shown repeatedly that the *majority* of birth mothers do *not* insist upon closed records*. (The implied "protection" against the stigma of illegitimacy is an antiquated product of the post-war years, and is neither necessary nor relevant in today's society.)

* https://www.americanadoptioncongress.org/maine_department_of_human_reso.php

I further maintain that denying adoptees access to OBCs (and other documentation related to their adoption) has the potential to cause mental harm, and in some cases actual physical consequences. As is evidenced by the proliferation of genealogy research and DNA testing, all humans have an innate sense of connection to their biological roots and their lineage. Even going back to ancient history, human beings have prized and preserved their bloodlines. Adoptees are the ONLY Americans who are denied this information by law, in the case of sealed OBCs. This impacts not only the adoptee, but his or her children and descendants as well. All Americans, all human beings in fact, have the right to know their genetic background not only for genealogical purposes, but for the benefits of having a complete family medical history. This is so important that the U.S. Surgeon General urges all Americans to "know your family medical history." Adoptees are denied by law the chance to follow a health recommendation made by a federal agency. **

** <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4245280/>

I respectfully submit that the time has come to revise the outdated system of closed adoption that was enacted at a time when family medical history was not as comprehensive as it is today. I ask that you consider the right of all Americans - and specifically, the citizens of the State of Connecticut - to have full access to all personal documentation concerning their birth. I ask that you restore a basic human right to adoptees to know their biological origins for any reason they choose - whether for genealogical or

health concerns. I ask that you support SB 113, and give 21st century adoptees the rights as every other American citizen to obtain their original birth certificates from the State of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Mary Baldwin
Adoptee - born 1962, State of Tennessee

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