

Dear legislators:

I am an adoptive parent. I am also employed as a social worker who works with foster and adoptive families. I have worked with adoptees and foster children for the past 26 years. I have a Post Master's clinical issues in adoption. I have been working on the issue of adoptee access to their original birth certificates for the past 5 years. I state my credentials to let you know I am very informed about the issue of adoption both on a personal and professional level.

I did not know until after I adopted my children about the practice of state governments amending the birth certificates to indicate the adoptive parents gave birth to their children. I have a biological child as well. She knows who her biological parents are. She knows where she was born. She knows the names of her parents. She does not have to live in a state of hidden truth. I was absolutely shocked when I saw my two adopted children's birth certificates. I was at my biological child's birth. I was not at my adopted children's birth. I would not want to lie to my children. I love them and do not want them to have to live a life of lies. The day I learned about the lies of the birth certificates was the day I decided to work towards ensuring my children had access to their information regarding their origins. I advocated along with a committed group of people to ensure the children would have that access. They were given that right when the Connecticut legislature stated they along with other individuals born and adopted in Connecticut on and after 10/1/83 could have that right.

I did not stop advocating for all adoptees to gain access to their genetic information after my children were granted their rights because I believe it should be a right and not a privilege to know the story of one's origins. Society honors telling the truth. The government by amending the birth certificates is telling individuals born and adopted before 10/1/83 that it is okay for the government to lie about their origins. By amending birth certificates it is telling the individual they have no worth to society. That is so wrong.

It should be noted that it is a proven fact that birth (first) parents were not promised anonymity. We know this because when the first parent surrenders the child, there is no amending of the birth certificates. So if a child grows up in foster care without being adopted then the birth certificates are not amended. It is only when the child is adopted that the birth certificates are amended. In Connecticut there was no law which promised anonymity. When society wanted children to have permanency in their life, and the child could not return to their first parent, society wanted the child to be adopted. If society wanted children to be adopted then why did they punish the child by not allowing the child to know their information.

Please ask yourself what would you do if people had secrets about your origins. Ask yourself what would you do if you were the only one who did not know the secret. Ask yourself would you be okay knowing others think you are a secret.

There are so many organizations which advocate for adoptees to have access to original birth certificates. These organizations include members who are first parents, adoptive parents, and adoptees. Why are the ones who would be impacted by the changes in the laws want to provide adoptees to have access to their OBCs is because it is the right thing to do. Secrets are harmful. We want truth in society. You have the authority to ensure truth is more powerful than lies.

I ask you to please approve what is denied to individuals who have been adopted. Please ensure all people live by the same rules. There should not be a set of rules for one group of people and a different set of rules for other individuals. No one person is above and law and no person is below the law. Laws should be applied equally for all people. Since nonadoptees' birth certificates are not amended then adoptees should be able to get their original birth certificates. My children are able to get their birth certificates when they reach the age of majority. The adoptees who have already reached the age of majority should have equal rights to their information that younger adoptees have.

Please vote yes on SB113.

Sincerely

Brian Donahue

Rocky Hill Connecticut

Sent from my iPhone