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Testimony

In support of S.B. 113

AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES BY ADULT ADOPTED PERSONS

Planning and Development Committee

Dear Co-Chairs Cassano, McCarthy-Vahey, Ranking Members Champagne, Zawistowski, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 113 and thank you for raising the bill. A constituent of mine, Karen Caffrey, introduced this issue to me, and she has worked tirelessly on it on behalf of all adult adopted persons seeking their birth records. I believe this to be an issue of civil rights and is good policy as a state to modernize our practice and provide adult persons access to their genetic history.

I testified in support of the issue last year but since then I have had some relevant personal experiences within the realm of family genealogy that I wish to share with Committee. I have always had an interest in my family ancestry and, for somewhere around 15 years, an Ancestry.com account. A few years back I submitted DNA sample, and although the genealogy results themselves were not terribly surprising in my case, the social networking aspect of the Ancestry DNA website have been remarkable. Over the last 2 years, I have received notifications of perhaps hundreds of DNA matches with other people in the Ancestry DNA database, and the rate at which I receive these notifications increases by the day. Most significantly, I have even received messages from adoptees who appear to be related to me seeking to find more information on my family tree. This brought this issue into clear perspective to me - it is inevitable that adoptees will have access to information on who their birth parents are, and, in fact, the information is already there. Because of this, there is no reason to further delay modernizing our policy on birth records - now is the time to provide adoptees with the right to access their genetic and family history.

Thank you for your time and consideration.