



State of Connecticut
House of Representatives

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Planning and Development Committee
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Testimony of Representative Gregory Haddad
In Support of Open Access to Adoption Records
Support SB 113

Sen. Cassano, Rep. McCarthy, Sen. Champagne, Rep. Zawistowski, members of the Planning and Development Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am Gregg Haddad, State Representative from the 54th district in Mansfield. I offer this testimony in support of allowing adoptee's open-access to their original birth records. I urge the committee to pass SB 113.

Current law in Connecticut allows adoptees to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate, so long as their adoption was finalized after October 1, 1983. The passage of this legislation was a great victory for adoptees in our state. However, there is still more to be done in this area.

Since 2015 when legislation was passed on the issue, only pre-1983 adoptees are barred access to such original birth certificates without a probate court order and also impose a requirement that grants access to identifying information about a birth parent only with that parent's consent. The law restricts DCF and other child placing agencies from releasing information that would identify the biological parents to the adoptee. DCF is required to locate the birth parents and get their written consent. The process is laborious for the adoptee to get an answer to a simple question: Where did I come from? I think it is an injustice that this is still the process we have in place for our adoptees adopted before October of 1983.

I am a proud parent of a six year old daughter, Natalie, who my wife and I adopted in 2013. As we considered adoption, we gave a lot thought to the question of how we would answer questions that our daughter might have about her origins -- questions about who she is and where she came from. We thought about ourselves and our self-interests. Would we feel comfortable if our daughter had an active relationship with her birthmother? And we acknowledge and respect the feelings of birthparents. But what made us decide to ensure that our daughter will have full access to all of the information we have about her birth came after we thought about her interests and prioritized them above everything else.

It is only natural to be curious about where one comes from. "Who am I?" is a basic question, that everyone should be able to answer, no matter their age. Yes, there are other reasons that this is important, for example, access to medical histories. However, to me, far more pressing, is that we all should have a fundamental right to know where we all came from. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many adoptees in both our state and our country.

In an age appropriate way, we have done our best to be open with Natalie about her life's story, as difficult and sensitive of a topic it is. Secrecy would not have promoted the trusting relationship I hope to maintain with my daughter. My daughter knows her birthmother. We've visited her and spent time together. The relationship is a good, and I'm very grateful for that.

Returning more specifically to the legislative effort to open adoption records, as an adoptive father who has wrestled with all of the implications that such a change would entail, I've ultimately concluded that there is only one solution that is justified and that we must open adoption records for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with my testimony.