

Dear Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

On January 6, 2010, I received the call that I had been waiting a lifetime for - my daughter's lifetime. I relinquished her for adoption in 1988 as an unsupported, single college student and I fervently hoped that we would be reconnected someday. I always thought about her, most especially on her birthday. I looked forward to her 18th birthday, hoping that I might hear from her at that time. As a mother who relinquished, I felt that I had no right to look for my daughter. I had no information about where she might be, what her new adopted name was or how to even begin searching for her. To this day, as a mother from Illinois, I have no way to obtain my daughter's amended birth certificate that would give me her adopted name. There are many mothers like myself who have no way to find their children and must only wait patiently for that call that will put the pieces of their life back together.

I believe that all adoptees have the right to their official record of birth. They should not be denied information that every other U.S. citizen is entitled to have. It is abhorrent to me that anyone would use "birth mother confidentiality" as a reason to deny adoptees the right to their own information. There is no such thing as birth mother confidentiality. I was not promised, nor did I want, confidentiality from my daughter. In fact, at relinquishment, I begged the judge to allow me to find out information about my daughter as she grew up and was denied.

The day that I spoke to my daughter for the first time ever was the best day of my life! I celebrate it every year as our "reuniversary". Words cannot describe how overjoyed I was to be found. My daughter was, is and always will be the greatest joy of my life.

Please support SB 113 and allow every adopted citizen in Connecticut the right to their original birth certificate.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Eileen Mertens