

Dear Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

My name is Karen Quesnel, and I am a Connecticut birth mother writing in support of SB 113 to open access for all adult adoptees to obtain their original birth certificates.

As you may recall, last legislative session I submitted written and personal testimony about this issue, and I learned a lot in the process. What I believe in my heart to be a civil right as a citizen of this country, and a right as a citizen of this state, has opposition that I never anticipated. I learned that my son did not have the right to the document of his actual birth because he went through the hoops to obtain it - only to be denied. It was shocking to both of us.

I relinquished my son through Catholic Charities in 1981, and I actually have the paperwork from all those years ago: from my intake paperwork at St. Agnes Home for Unwed Mothers, to the notification of my rights I signed with a Catholic Charities attorney. If you are hearing that promises of confidentiality were made to birth mothers from Catholic Charities, well, that simply isn't true. I was not promised confidentiality, nor did I want it. I have included an image of the acknowledgement of the meeting with the Catholic Charities attorney here for the committee to see. If you would like to see the rest of my documents, including the Termination of Parental Rights form that I signed that also did not promise confidentiality, please let me know and I will share them with you. It never occurred to me that my son would not freely be given information about me when he became an adult. I clearly remember being told he would be given everything when he became of age if he wanted it. And I remember it so clearly because I clung to that hope that he would someday.

I do understand the concern about privacy, however here we are in 2020, where consumer DNA kits can tell us quite a bit about ourselves from what we should or shouldn't eat, to who we are related to and where we are from. You only have to browse the blogs or social media groups, or even TV shows to find long lost family members finding each other - and often the communications involve more distant family members like cousins, aunts and uncles. If an adult would like communication with their birth parent(s), obtaining the original birth certificate is the most direct and private way possible.

Please pass this bill to restore the rights for all adult adoptees to obtain their original birth certificates.  
Thank you,

Karen Quesnel

To Whom It May Concern:

I hereby acknowledge that on Oct. 13, 1981,  
I conferred with Attorney Samuel E. Zuel at  
Catholic Family Services and was  
advised by him/her on such legal matters as the keeping of my child,  
termination of my parental rights, Notice of Hearing, Waiver of Notice of  
Hearing, Appointment of Statutory Parent, Adoption, Appeal Rights, and  
related matters.

I further acknowledge that I am fully aware that as the natural parent  
of Julia Galan, born on \_\_\_\_\_,  
19\_\_\_\_\_, I have certain rights to determine how my child shall be raised,  
and these rights are called parental rights, that these rights can only be  
taken away from me by a local Probate Court; that I am entitled to a notice  
of the hearing before the court and an opportunity to appear before the court  
to state why my parental rights should or should not be terminated.

I am also aware that I may waive my right to notice of the court hearing  
and that if I do so, I am voluntarily relinquishing or giving up my opportunity  
to be notified of the hearing date, time and place, and that any action by the  
court in terminating my parental rights is as binding on me as if I were  
physically present in the court.

I am considering having my parental rights terminated and having the  
court appoint Catholic Family Services, Inc., Archdiocese of Hartford  
as Statutory Parent in my place in order to enable Catholic Family Services  
to place my child in adoption. I acknowledge that Catholic Family  
Services has advised me that I need not place my child for adoption, and  
has not encouraged me to do so and will assist me whatever my decision is.  
I acknowledge that I make my decision of my free will and without the  
influence or persuasion of Catholic Family Services. If I agree to have my  
parental rights terminated, and they are, I understand that I will have no  
rights of any kind in any matter relating to my child other than by an appeal  
to the court for a change within 30 days of the court's decision. ~~I have~~  
~~voluntarily agreed to have my child placed in adoption.~~

I understand that I can discuss the legal ramifications of having my  
parental rights terminated with an attorney of my choice and have been  
encouraged to do so.

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut, this 15th  
day of Oct., 1981.

Parent/s Signature: Karen A. Johnson

Attorney's Signature: Samuel E. Zuel