

Please see my revised written testimony. My testimony was published and then taken down and I am not sure if it was because of the embedded image, but I have removed it. Please publish my original testimony or this in its place if you are not able to do so. Thank you.

Karen Quesnel

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.

Last legislative session I submitted written and in-person 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, well that simply isn't true. I was not promised confidentiality, nor did I want it. I have a document of acknowledgement of a meeting with me and a Catholic Charities attorney from October 1981 that includes no such promise. If you would like to see it, and 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