



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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### **Testimony in Opposition to S.B. 113** **An Act Concerning Access To Original Birth Certificates By Adult Adopted Persons** **February 21, 2020**

Co-Chairs Cassano and McCarthy Vahey; Vice Chairs Needleman and Baker; Ranking Members Champagne and Zawistowski; and distinguished members of the Planning & Development Committee:

Today I voice my opposition to SB 113. Thank you for reading my testimony that deals with a bill that opens all sealed birth certificates to adoptees. Some of you remember that 6 years ago we voted for a compromise to open all birth certificates if the adoption took place after 1983. That was due to the fact that the biological mother signed papers that stated just that. With all adoptions after 1983, the records would be open when the adoptee reached 18 yrs of age. We negotiated that bill and the agreement was if we support this, all adoptions prior to 1983 would remain sealed. Of course that was not what has happened and that agreement has been broken. The reasons always given has always been the adoptees rights and access to medical records.

I understand the arguments that adoptees have a right to this information but that does not reflect the true agreement and simplifies a very different time in our history. In the early 1970's I worked with these women, abortion was illegal but women did get them. The group I worked with had 2 goals 1) to keep these babies safe and secondly to help these young women at a very difficult time. When these women chose not to abort and to put their babies up for adoption they were promised that they would be protected from their names being disclosed. Today many of these women are in their 70's and 80's. What this bill allows is for these senior women to be "outed" to local town clerks and their entire family.

This bill picks a winner and allows one sides rights to override the other side. In the 70's the decision to actually carry a baby to term was a courageous decision. Women and girls dropped out of school, left their families and gave up the lives they knew in order to choose to give life to these babies. Now for that courageous and selfless act what does this bill propose? As far as medical records, today's medical technology makes getting valuable medical information available to all. It's interesting that today almost 40% of babies born in Connecticut have no father listed. Where is that medical history? I believe that this bill is an attack on elderly women who didn't take the easy way out and took an heroic route to ensure life of this baby. Now while in the final phase of their lives they are going to have their lives turned upside down and be "outed". Both sides have rights and choosing winner and losers is terrible.

Today I ask you to think about the silent group of women who don't have a lobbyist and organization behind them. Who will stand up for them? They are counting on us to honor a long term agreement and not change their lives forever. Remember, most states do not have open access. Our goal should always be reunification, but this decision must be mutual.

According to Catholic Charities they do reach out to both sides after a request. In about 50 percent of cases a mutual decision for reunification happens and in the other 50 percent the other party refuses. This bill gives the mother's name to the adoptee, once that is done no further requirements exists. I am including an attachment with further information from the Office of Legislative Research on this subject matter. Thank you for your consideration.



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Attachment