

Feb. 20, 2020

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 113, An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Certificates by Adult Adopted Persons

To the Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am an adoptee. But, unlike people adopted in Connecticut and born between Jan. 1, 1944 and Oct. 1, 1983, I was adopted in New York State. And after years of intransigently holding up an antiquated law meant to protect birth parents, the New York State Legislature passed a bill to allow adoptees 18 years of age and older to obtain a certified birth certificate in their birth parents' names. On January 15 of this year, as I filled out the papers to obtain my birth certificate—the first day the state accepted requests—I cried. And the bank officer who notarized the papers for me began to cry, too. I cried at the Post Office, as I mailed the forms. I cried because since the age of 14, many decades ago, when I was adopted by my father's second wife, my birth records were sealed. On that day, my mother, an attorney, who died when I was six years old, disappeared from all official records of my life and I became the "biological" daughter of a woman who didn't meet me until I was 11. My birth certificate, an official government document, became a lie.

It's about time that Connecticut (by *my* choice, my adopted home), allow those adoptees born within the designated dates to obtain their original birth certificates. In signing the New York bill into law, Governor Andrew Cuomo called access to birth records "a basic human right." As long as Connecticut denies original birth certificates to any adoptee, it is stomping on their human right to know who they are. This law needs to be changed so all adoptees in Connecticut can obtain their original birth certificates.

I strongly support SB 113 and I beseech the members of the Planning and Development Committee to pass it through committee and to passionately advocate for this bill within the full state legislature. I hope that I will see this bill passed and signed into law so that Connecticut adoptees will have the opportunity to cry the tears of joy and sadness that I've been crying.

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