

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 743

Chairman William Smith  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Maryland State Senate  
Annapolis, MD

Chairman Smith,  
Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher,  
Members of the committee:

Thank you for hearing testimony today on SB 743 which would allow all adult adoptees access to our Original Birth Certificates.

My name is Peggy Klappenberger and I am an adoptee and a life-long Marylander.

It's not possible to condense into 2 minutes all the ways being adopted and not having access to my information has impacted my life. I don't think we could cover that even if we had all day.

It would be a story filled with embarrassing trips to the doctor's office and being handed back forms because they are 'incomplete' or being told by the doctor in the NICU after my oldest son was born 6 weeks early that I should get my medical history.

There would be stories about having to go to the health department and get a new copy of my amended birth certificate when presenting documents for my real ID because the one I had listed an issue date more than one year after my birth. The new copy, magically, has a different issue date from the copy I had used for most of my life.

Or the other time at the MVA after I had turned 21 and they were skeptical of my amended birth certificate because it doesn't list a hospital and is not signed by a doctor.

Or stories about all the times in school my well intentioned teachers gave us an assignment based on the assumption that we all came from related households. I turned in a genetics assignment one time blank, and it didn't go over well. But it was my truth. I couldn't fill out the Punnett Square.

But perhaps the most important story to tell, is the one when I had gone through the Confidential Intermediary to access my information. I had asked a simple question – in what hospital was I born? A question that likely, any non-adopted person can answer and couldn't imagine not knowing. But there I was, on the phone with a total stranger asking questions about myself. I will never forget how it felt to hear her say "I can't tell you that." It was a gut punch. She sat on the other end of the phone with my file laid out in front of her. I could hear the paper shuffling as she looked through them. She likely had every answer to every question I had ever had, but I was only asking one. And I was denied.

I urge you to vote favorably on SB 743. It past time for Maryland to give adoptees the voice they have been denied in adoption.

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