

Delegate Luke Clippinger
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building, Room 101 Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Maryland General Assembly
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Testimony in Favor of Maryland Assembly SB0743 & HB 1039

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Chairman Smith, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Rachida Djebel (née Llireva Jean Averill) , born in Cleveland, Ohio (1945) , adopted in Sarpy County, Nebraska (1950), and Maryland Resident since 1976. I am also a Viet Nam veteran (1963-1966). I have been an advocate for adoptee rights for many decades and work with adoptees to secure information regarding birth history.

I and my younger sister were abandoned in a dog pound in Douglas County, Nebraska in 1948 by our parents who kept our brother with them. Once found, my sister and I were immediately separated and I have not seen her since, nor have I seen my brother since that fateful day. My sister, born in 1947, was adopted at or shortly after 6 months in Douglas County, Nebraska, because of worse than Dickensian law, still refuses to give me any information regarding her, citing 'confidentiality' ---laughable since she and I share between 2000 and 3500 cMs of DNA.

DNA has confirmed my direct genetic ties to both maternal & paternal sides of my family, but has not produced matches with close family, siblings or parents, with the exception of one paternal uncle who I asked to submit a DNA sample just for the record..

Because of childhood trauma (abuse from both parents and adopters), all I remembered for years was that my father's surname was Averill and that my siblings were taken away from me. I was 38 years old before I retrieved my OBC in a time when there were no advocates for adoptees. This because my Nebraska adoptive birth certificate had no city/county/state of birth listed on it, thus denying me a passport. That denial propelled and compelled me to determine where I was born and to whom. It was my right to know my birth origins and to secure the OBC. Ohio-whose laws were as Dickensian as Nebraska's in 1982- agreed. Once I knew it was the place of birth. I petitioned the Court who agreed that I had shown just cause, and in turn provided me with a line-by-line exact copy of the original OH birth certificate CERTIFIED. Because the judge confirmed my rights, I was able to satisfy the Passport Agency's requirements for my passport and, more importantly, was able to give my son and now grandson the history and reality of mother and grandmother. DNA has proven genetic relationship to both my paternal and maternal families.

I urge respectfully that you grant Maryland's adoptees born in the state unrestricted access to their Original Birth Certificates by passage of these two bills which will return equal rights to adoptees born and adopted in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Rachida Djebel
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