

My name is Ben Knight. I was born in Baltimore 63 years ago and adopted by a loving family in Catonsville. I currently live in Harford County and work in Baltimore County. I consider myself a proud son of Maryland. However, I am denied the right to see my original birth certificate (OBC).

The current law in Maryland will grant some adult adoptees the right to see their OBC, but it discriminates against other adult adoptees because of their age. HB1039 and SB0743 would change that. These bills would give all adoptees who are old enough to vote in Maryland the equal right to receive a copy of their OBC. Each adoptee's story begins with a birth. An original birth certificate serves as a record of that moment. It is a treasure to be passed down in a family and treated with respect. It is not a document of shame that must be hidden from view. It is a testament to who we are, the first certificate of our lives, and a part of our heritage as citizens of Maryland.

Adoptees like me deserve to be treated with the same dignity and rights as other citizens. We deserve equality in the law. In your role as Committee Member, please think of the positive effect HB1039 and SB0743 will have on adult adoptees and their families throughout Maryland. I respectfully ask you to improve the current law by voting Yes and supporting the passage of these bills.

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