

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: HB1039/SB0743

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

I am a sixty-seven-year-old woman and was born in Detroit, Michigan on September 11, 1952. My mother relinquished me at birth and I was sent to the Sarah Fisher Orphanage. When I was two months old a couple took me to their home then adopted me. I then soon became the eldest of eight adopted children and we also had a series of thirty-five foster children living with us until I reached the age of twelve. A little over twenty years ago I surprisingly and sorrowfully learned that **my daughter had traveled to Maryland, gave birth to my granddaughter then relinquished her for adoption to a couple who lived in the state.**

I have always been a strong advocate for Adoptees Rights and in 1993 founded and directed the "Adoption Identity Movement of NorthEast Michigan " Our slogan was "Knowledge Is The Key To Our Identity!" It is my heartfelt belief that adopted persons age eighteen and older should have the right to request and receive their own original unredacted birth certificates. Not knowing who my birth parents were, my heritage and medical history had a severe and profound impact on my life, especially as an adult. The secrets of my origins and circumstances of my relinquishment caused me to fantasize of endless scenarios and quite often left me with strong feelings of hopelessness, depression, at times paranoid and dealing with an acute identity crisis. This led to difficulties in most of my relationships that numerous other adoptees I've met through the years expressed they suffered with as well. Besides these psychological impacts not

having access to one's own medical history is equally as devastating since it's imperative to be aware of inheritance risks which could be offset by preventative measures. I am well able to attest to this fact through my personal life story.

This is nothing short of a Civil Rights Issue. Allowing adoptees to obtain their original

unredacted birth certificates would provide the answers to many of the questions we've struggled with and agonized over since childhood and bring dignity to our lives! I am respectfully asking the Committee to vote YES and recommend the passage of HB1039 and SB0743.

I sincerely appreciate your time and efforts towards this life-changing issue.

Respectfully,

Michelle Terse St. Amant
Traverse City, Michigan