

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

RE: SB0331

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

Maryland Adoptee Rights was formed a few years ago as a result of my experience of navigating Maryland's cumbersome, difficult, arbitrary procedures, to obtain my vital and biological identity that was sealed by the court a month before my first birthday and subsequently issued a new certificate that's altered to invalidly claim I was conceived by my adopted parents. My experience left me feeling dehumanized and marginalized.

Since I began my advocacy work, I have not only learned that without the permission of the court, Maryland law denies a Maryland adoptee the right to obtain a copy of my original birth certificate (OBC), but that the laws apply varying restrictions and conditions according to the finalization date of the person's adoption. Current conditions exclude a large Maryland adoptee population that are treated unfairly.

SB 331 creates equal birth certificate rights for all Maryland adoptees. It allows all Maryland adult adoptees, upon reaching the age of 18 years of age, equal access to their OBC. It reflects the simple, inclusive, unrestricted right process that nine states have on the books (Kansas, Alaska, Oregon, Alabama, Colorado, New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, and New York). Denying adopted people OBC access is an infringement of their human and civil right to know their biological origins. Maryland adult adoptees should have the same access provided to every other U.S citizen. We deserve the right to equal treatment under the law.

Please support Maryland in being a leader in adoptee equality and adoption reform. Return unrestricted and unconditional OBC rights to all Maryland adoptees. Maryland Adoptee Rights recommends passage of SB0331. Please vote FAVORABLE for SB0331.

Respectfully,

Susie Stricker

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