

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 331 BY MARTIN WHITE  
SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE, FOR JANUARY 26, 2021 HEARING

My name is Martin White. I am writing in support of SB 331, Adoption – Access to Birth and Adoption Records and Search, Contact, and Reunion Services. I am a birthfather who placed a son for adoption in 1987. I was raised in Maryland and am a proud graduate of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. I continue to have extensive ties to the state including many friends and relatives who live in Maryland although I now live in Washington, DC.

As a birthfather I would welcome any contact with me that my son would like to have. The same is true for other birthparents I have known. In addition, I believe as a matter of principal that the access to accurate and truthful records provided by SB 331 is in the interest of all participants in the adoption process; and that adoptees and birthparents have a right to access to accurate and truthful information on a matter so central to their lives and identities.

The old law, with its provision for disclosure vetoes, is based on an outdated presumption that secrecy is a primary value in adoption and that participants in the process can and even should pretend that the adoption never happened. This is a holdover from a long-discredited approach. It is now generally recognized that adopted adults have a legitimate interest in, and often a pressing emotional need for, knowledge of their origins and that this is in no way inconsistent with being a part of a happy and loving adoptive family. Similarly, birthparents like me never lose their emotional tie to and concern for their children.

SB 331, with its provision for contact preference statements instead of disclosure vetoes, appropriately balances the interests of the limited number of adoptees and birthparents who would prefer to avoid contact (at least temporarily) with the rights of all adoptees and birthparents to accurate information about a central part of their lives.

Please enact SB 331.

Thank you for your consideration.

/s/Martin White  
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