



The Senate of the State of New Hampshire

107 North Main Street, Concord, N.H. 03301-4951

LOU D'ALLESANDRO
Senate District 20

State House, Room 117
(603) 271-2117

March 11, 2015

Dear Rep. Benninghoff,

I write in full support of your efforts with HB 162, relative to adoptees obtaining their original birth certificates. In New Hampshire, we recently celebrated the ten year anniversary of the passage of SB335, which granted adult adoptees in New Hampshire access to birth records.

As the parent of two adopted children, I sponsored the legislation because I knew it was the right thing to do. I watched my daughter struggle with not only a series of health issues that we later learned were likely genetic, but also with some fundamental questions pertaining to her identity.

The bill was passed, but not without significant effort. I understood the concerns of the opposition and to help alleviate some of those concerns, the legislation included a contact preference form for the biological parent. Since SB335 was enacted, nearly 1,700 original birth certificates have been issued by New Hampshire's Office of Vital Records. During this time, only 13 of 25,000 birth mothers have indicated they do not want contact with their biological child. The feedback I've received from sponsoring this legislation has been overwhelmingly positive.

As I reflect on my 16 years in the State Senate, I can say with confidence that this was one of my most important accomplishments as a legislator and a point of pride for me. I believe this has had a deeply positive impact on a great many lives.

Knowing who we are as individuals seems so basic that it is easy to take for granted. Not being privy to such fundamental information is a terrible burden for anyone to carry. I commend you for bringing forth this very important legislation and I hope your colleagues will be persuaded by the success we've had in New Hampshire. I can't stress enough that I wholeheartedly believe this is the right thing to do and that you all have an opportunity to do something that will positively impact the lives of many of your constituents.

Sincerely,

Lou D'Allesandro

New Hampshire Marks 10th Anniversary of Issuing Adoptees Original Birth Certificates.

Concord, New Hampshire - January 2nd, 2015 marks the 10th anniversary of the issuing of original birth certificates by the New Hampshire Vital Records Office to adult adoptees born in New Hampshire. New Hampshire restored the right for adult adoptees to obtain their original birth certificates in 2004 by passing Senate Bill 335, sponsored by State Senator Lou D'Allesandro. SB335 was legislation that balanced the rights of **all adult adoptees** to obtain their original birth certificates while at the same time respecting the rights of birth parents to express their desire regarding contact from their biological children via the contact preference form.

In 2004 as SB335 made its way through the New Hampshire legislature, it was opposed by almost every institution imaginable, including the National Council for Adoption, Planned Parenthood, Right to Life, the Catholic Diocese of Manchester, ACLU, and in-state adoption organizations and adoption lawyers. All proclaimed the sky would fall and adoption and birth parents would be irreparably harmed if this legislation would become law. Fortunately, almost 70% of the New Hampshire legislature recognized that all these doomsayers were wrong and passed SB335.

For over ten years now the New Hampshire Vital Records Office has been issuing copies of original birth certificates to New Hampshire-born adult adoptees. Since 2005, the New Hampshire Vital Records Office has **issued over 1,690 original birth certificates to adult adoptees**. In that time **only 13 of 25,000 birth mothers, less than 1 percent, have indicated they do not want contact with their biological child**. The Vital Records Office implemented the new law into their policies and procedures almost seamlessly and without a fiscal note.

The passing of SB335 in 2004 has played a major role in influencing many other states, especially here in New England where Maine (2009) and Rhode Island (2011) passed similar legislation. Since 2004 many other states have passed varying forms of adoptee rights legislation, including Connecticut, Massachusetts, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, and Colorado, resulting in hundreds of thousands of adoptees across the country obtaining their original birth certificates.

For more information on the anniversary of SB335, contact:

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