June 20, 2013

The Honorable Katharine M. Watson
Chair, Committee on Children & Youth
41A East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2144

    RE: HB 162 – Adoptee Access to Birth Certificate

Dear Rep. Watson:

I am an adopted person born in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 1947. I am writing in support of HB 162.

Everyone is somebody's child. It is how you define yourself in this world, and how others define you. How many times have you heard something akin to "You are just like your father" or "you have your mother's eyes"? You are part of a family, you have a heritage.

When I was 40 someone found a document in my parent's home stating that I was adopted, and nothing in my world was ever the same. I was not who I believed myself to be. Reading the adoption decree and seeing my original name I was thrown into a state of confusion. After some time I was able to discern that my beloved aunt, who had died just six months prior to the discovery, was actually my birth mother. That made my father my uncle, my mother my aunt, and my sister my cousin. Few members of my extended family knew anything about the adoption and those that did would say nothing.

I knew from the beginning that this façade was created for my benefit by three loving people who wanted the best for me. I have since legally changed my name back to my original baptized name to honor my birth mother and her sister who she named me after, "my other mother". My three 'parents' died prior my discovery. I have made peace with my family. The only thing left is for me to have access to my original birth record.

Every adoptee has his or her own story. Many of us were raised by loving adopted parents who will always hold that title in our hearts. Having access to original birth records may not be important for some, but for many of us it is, and we feel it is our right. For me, it will be my validation, the statement of who I am. The truth.

I ask that HB162 be voted out of Committee and sent to the full House of Representatives for a vote,

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Terese Lenczycki