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June 21, 2013

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

RE: HB 162 – Adoptee Access to Birth Certificate

Dear Rep. Watson:

I am the mother of a son born in Warren, Pennsylvania, in 1969, and relinquished for adoption. I am writing in support of HB 162.

In 1969, adoption was one of very few options available for a 16 year old unwed mother. I reluctantly made this strongly recommended choice and surrendered my son. In the years since, I've learned about the enormous consequences of that choice both to my son and to me. Secrecy about the adoption process and the people involved (adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents) leads to a sense of shame. Adoptees are disadvantaged on so many levels by not having access to information about their origins. For most it creates a feeling of being incomplete, the inability to feel whole.

When I relinquished my son, I never requested or was promised confidentiality. As a result, in the absence of a system that allowed him access to me and to his family history, several years ago I hired a firm specializing in reuniting families separated by adoption, and I contacted him. This connection answered questions and provided information he previously had no way to access. Our reunion lifted the secrecy and shame each of us had lived with and allowed us to heal and move forward with our lives.

To me, HB 162 is about treating adopted persons equally and correcting the inequities in PA law. The positive impact the passing of HB 162 would have is far reaching and profound. I strongly urge you to move HB 162 beyond the Committee and send this legislation to the full House of Representatives for a vote.

Thanking you in advance for your leadership on this important issue.

Respectfully,



Sarah (Jones) McCue