



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105-3784

**Planning and Development Committee
Public Hearing, February 3, 2021
Testimony in
Opposition to**

H.B. 6105 “An Act Concerning Access to Original Birth Certificates By Adult Adopted Persons”

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference, the public policy office of Connecticut’s Catholic Bishops, is *opposed* to H.B. 6105 which seeks to eliminate the date restriction of October 1, 1983, which concerns access to original birth certificates by adopted persons. In 2014, the General Assembly approved legislation (PA- 14-133) implementing this change. Prior to that time state law prohibited access to original birth certificates by adopted persons. A compromise was reached by the General Assembly in order to balance the concerns of advocates for unlimited access and those in opposition to such access, of which the Conference and Catholic Charities organizations were members. The legislature determined that since adoption forms were modified in 1983, with a footnote that stated the information may eventually be released, then current law should match that change. H.B. 6105 would undo that compromise and open birth parents to an unwanted intrusion into their privacy.

The Conference, and Catholic Charities, believe that the enactment of H.B. 6105 would violate agreements between Catholic Charities adoption agencies and the agreement made with birth parents that their identity would not be revealed. These birth parents, who have moved on in their lives and may have built new families, deserve to have this serious agreement respected. Catholic Charities have procedures in place if an adopted child wishes to reach out to the birth parent. Through that process they have learned that some parents appreciate the contact, while others consider it a serious intrusion on their lives. During the adoption process, medical information is collected and can be made available to the adopted person without birth parent permission. This information does not identify the birth parent. In some cases, the birth parent medical information can also be updated and supplied to the adopted person by the adoption agency, such as Catholic Charities. This requires the cooperation of the birth parent. Original birth certificates can also be requested through the probate court process outlined in statute.

Without question, adoptees may be concerned about their health history. However, through acts of law, there are other groups of individuals who may never obtain health information about their actual biological parents. This may occur in cases of in vitro fertilization, surrogacy and children born in same-sex marriages. In these cases the birth certificates may not record both biological parents. In these situations the birth certificates may not record both biological parents. In these cases, the information is not recorded in order to retain privacy of one of the participants, but to primarily to build and solidify the actual parental relationship. Is it fair that the state allows the preservation of privacy in

these situations, but would then deny the privacy expected from the birth parents of an adoptee. The Planning and Development Committee should not adopt H.B. 6105, which remove the privacy rights of birth parents, while at the same time preserving the privacy of biological parents in other cases. The release of such information, contrary to stories of happy reunions between birth parents and adoptees, may also lead to situations damaging to existing family units.

The Conference urges the Planning and Development Committee to respect the compromise language reached among legislators in 2014 and to respect the expected privacy of birth parents by voting "No" on H.B. 6105.

Deacon David Reynolds

Associate Director for Public Policy

Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference