

Separating Hype from Fact

Why Adoption Reform Illinois Opposes HB 4623

Adoption Reform Illinois received a copy of a letter from the author of HB 4623 hyping the bill. For the full text of the letter go to:

<http://bastardette.blogspot.com/2008/04/illinois-mitchell-feigenholtz-spin.html>

“On March 10th of this year, State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz filed legislation that creates a *simple, fee-free procedure* by which an Illinois-born adoptee over the age of 21 may request a copy of his or her original birth certificate through the Illinois Bureau of Vital Statistics.”

“...adopted persons born AFTER January 1, 1946, would have to wait until April 1, 2009, to begin requesting copies of their original birth certificates.

“...During this six-month waiting period, birth parents who would welcome contact with their birth children and birth parents seeking anonymity would be able to convey their wishes to their birth children by signing up with the Illinois Adoption Registry.”

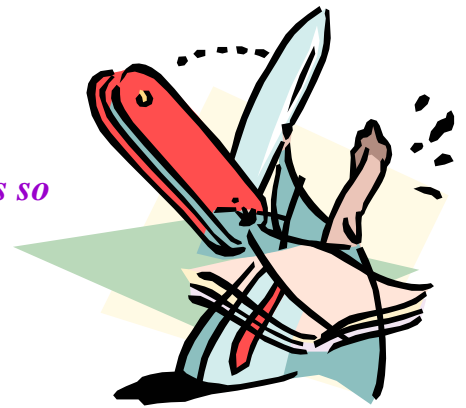
“All birth parent requests for anonymity filed with the Registry would expire upon the birth parent's death...”

“Although this is not a "pure" OBC (for original birth certificate) access bill, *H.B. 4623 will release 100% of the original birth certificates which were retroactively sealed in 1947, and 99% of the original birth certificates which have been sealed since then.*”

“The rare adoptees who will be the subject of birth parent "requests for anonymity" filed under this law will have the option of receiving copies of their obc's from which only the identifying information pertaining to the anonymity-seeking birth parent has been deleted AND are likely to find updated medical background information waiting for them at the Illinois Adoption Registry...”

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We'd like to clarify the facts so below are some excerpts from the letter along with our comments.



On March 12, Sara Feigenholz's office told callers the purpose of the March 13 hearing was only to approve "language changes" made in the bill. The "change in language" added 55 pages. The revised bill was made available via the legislative website only hours before it was voted out of the Adoption Reform Committee where it was substituted for a 12-page "shell" bill. A 77-page bill does NOT set out a simple procedure.



HB 4623 creates two classes of adoptees. Those born before 1946, who are entitled to their original birth certificate (OBC) and those born after January 1, 1946 who are not.



HB 4623 allows birth parents wishing no contact to exercise an access veto. In these situations adoptees will receive a birth certificate with the names of the parents and the birth name of the adoptee removed.



Will the Registry routinely search Illinois death records for names of registered birthparents and crosscheck its records to verify identification? How would the Registry access death certificates for out-of-state birthparents?



If indeed, 99 percent of adoptees will ultimately receive their original birth certificates with this bill, then why..

* set up a six-month waiting period giving birth parents five options for conveying their wishes for contact or anonymity through the Illinois Adoption Registry?

* solicit birth parents who "would welcome contact" at all. Is this a ruse to solicit business for the Registry or the CI system?



Legal counsel has told us the language of HB 4623 allows parents to remove their child's birth name as well. How can birth parents, who relinquished ALL rights, be allowed to remove the adoptee's name?



The bill says that adoptees unable to get an OBC can apply to receive medical information five years hence, not immediately.

... (like everyone who uses the Registry, birth parents seeking to file a request for anonymity must choose between paying the \$40 registration fee or providing updated medical information).

Although, thus far, the most vocal opponents of House Bill 4623 have been the right-to-life movement's paid lobbyists... and obscure internet entities...

For more unverified statistics used to justify HB 4623 see:

<http://bastardette.blogspot.com/2008/04/illinois-astounding-claim-most-adoptees.html>



So adoptees may get NO medical information after all.

The "obscure" Internet entities that issued an open letter urging legislators to vote against HB 4623 include

- * 14 state or national adoption reform groups
- * 2 state legislators who effected passage of "clean" bills restoring adoptee rights in Maine and New Hampshire
- * 2 doctors of psychology, experts in post adoption issues
- * 3 published authors and a filmmaker with personal experience of adoption
- * and more

Obscure, to be sure!

If you are an Illinois resident, triad member or not, please write to your state representative asking them to vote "NO" on this bill.

If you don't know who your state representative is, go to: <http://www.votesmart.org/> to find the state legislator who represents your district. If you were born or adopted in Illinois but live elsewhere use the same link to find out who represents the district where you are from.

Send your letter by snail mail or fax. Most Illinois legislators appear to be unresponsive to email. And if your letter is under 250 words, then consider copying it to your local newspaper in Illinois or one of these newspapers with a large circulation in Illinois.

The author of the letter requests that you also send legislators a copy of your adoption decree. In the unlikely event that you have it, think carefully about whom you share it with. Your adoption decree is a personal legal document that belongs to the adoptive parents, not the adoptee. One hopes they would share it with their adopted son or daughter.

For more information contact:

Green Ribbon Campaign for Open Records

Triona Guidry

Midwest Representative

(847) 540-5938

or

Ann Wilmer

(410) 742-2456

or go to: <http://www.73adoptee.com>