

Committees:
Education
Finance and Appropriations
Finance Subcommittee
on Health & Human Services
Health and Aging-Ranking Member

13th District
City of Lakewood
Parts of Cleveland's West Side
Wards 15, 16, & 17
& Linndale
(614) 466-5921
(614) 719-3913 (fax)

Nickie J. Antonio
State Representative

February 20, 2013

Testimony: Ohio Adoptee Access to Records Bill- House Bill 61

Chair Butler, Ranking Member Stinziano and members of the Judiciary Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to hear Sponsor testimony from my joint sponsor Representative Pelanda and my self on this important issue for Ohio adopted adults.

House Bill 61 and the Senate companion bill SB 23- Introduced by Senators Beagle and Burke have been decades in the making. This legislation will provide adult adoptees that were born between 1964 and 1996 direct mechanisms to access to their original birth certificates, bring parity and fairness to the process and close a gap of selected access that exists today. Currently adoptees that were born before 1964 and after 1996 already enjoy nearly unfettered access to their original birth records.

Specifically the bill will allow the following:

- Ohio adoptees that were born between 1964 and 1996 will have access to their original birth certificate upon request at age 18. This allowance would go into effect starting one year from bill passage date. (Adoptees from before and after these dates already have access.) It will allow the Division of Vital Statistics 90 days to fill a request.
- Provides Ohio birthparents a way to file a Contact Preference Form specifying if and how they would like contact. This will be the first time they will have a say in this process.
- Provides for Ohio birthparents to complete and put on file an updated medical history for the adoptee regardless of contact preference.

My personal family experience with adoption was part of my motivation to jointly sponsor and champion this legislation, first brought to my attention by Adoption Network of Cleveland. Not only was a nephew lost to me through adoption many years ago, but years later, through work with Adoption Network in Cleveland, my sister was able to connect with her adult son and now enjoys a wonderful relationship with him and his daughter (her granddaughter- my great-niece).

I know how important it is for some adoptees to have all the pieces of the puzzle of their lives. This bill creates the opportunity for them to have access to those pieces should adult

adoptees so desire. This bill also provides us with the opportunity to correct an injustice that has beset thousands of Ohioans for many years.

Thank you for your attention. Representative Peland and I will be happy to answer any questions.