

To the members of the Medicaid, Health and Human Services Committee,

I am writing to request your support of Senate Bill 23 and to allow adoptees the right to obtain access to their birth certificate and adoption records.

I was born in Lucas County, Ohio on June 26, 1972. I was placed in the care of Lutheran Social Services immediately following by birth. In August of the same year I was permanently placed in my adoptive home. My childhood was filled with many wonderful family get togethers, vacations and holidays. I was treated with love, dignity and respect. Our family was all American. My parents never divorced, were highly educated and provided my brother and I a private education in the best schools. We went to church every Sunday and mom had dinner on the table every night.

From the time I can remember I knew I was adopted. I may have been way too young when I was told but I respect the idea of my adoptive parents wanting me to never feel like I was being deceived. If my life was so ideal why did I feel so out of place? I look so much like my adoptive father! Why did I always have the private struggle to feel the love they so showered on me? They never treated me different than my brother who was their biological son. I know they love us both equally. But I never really knew that! Something was not right. Something was missing. What is my real name? Who do I really look like? Why do I act like this? Frankly who am I?

I am 40 years old now. I have children of my own. My relationship with my adoptive mom has developed into more of a mentorship. She has been supportive of me no matter what struggles I put her through. Her unconditional love for me is unflinching. For that I am blessed.

My request of you is to understand the emptiness of those of us who struggle every day to define who we are. The basic core of our definition is a mystery. The record of our birth is not accurate. We have no beginning. For many of us the circumstance surrounding our birth may not have been ideal. The struggles the birth families faced at the time must have been immense. The secrets may never have been told. This is why Senate Bill 23 is so ideal for all involved. S.B. 23 provides the opportunity for the adoptee to find a beginning and thus maybe an end but also allow the private secrets maybe never told to remain as such if the birth mother so wishes.

Please consider our request and know that Senate Bill 23 is a right that all Ohioans should be afforded.

Thank you so much for your support.

Sonya Kimball