



**Testimony of Jaime Miracle,
Policy Director, NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio,
to House Judiciary Committee
Supporting House Bill 61
March 6, 2013**

Chairman Butler, Vice Chair Pelanda and Ranking Minority Member Stinziano, thank you for allowing me to testify in support of H.B. 61 today. On behalf of NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio, our more than 20,000 activists across the state, and the pro-choice majority, we stand behind this important bill to allow adoptees to gain access to their original birth certificates.

NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio supports this bill as part of our mission to make sure that all Ohioans have access to the full range of reproductive health options, including an adoption system that supports the needs of birth parents, not only at the time of the adoption, but throughout their lives. Ohio's current three tiered system does not meet that standard. This bill will allow adoptees born and adopted between 1964 and 1996 to get access to their original birth certificate and important family medical information; while protecting the privacy of birth parents by allowing them to express their desire for or against being contacted by the adult adoptee. This system will, in fact, better protect the privacy of birth parents by creating a system where they can express their preferences for being contacted, which currently does not exist.

I also stand before you today as a member of a family who grew through adoption. When I was six, my mother and father adopted my eight year old sister Amy. Because Amy had spent the first five years of her life with her biological family she had what these adoptees are looking for, information about and the possibility of contact with their birth parents. I cannot imagine how her life would have been different if she had been denied this information. Knowing where she came from and being able to access critical medical and other family information was very important to both her and my family.

Thank you for your time today, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.