



Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Good day,

My name is Claudia Corrigan D'Arcy and I am your neighbor in New York. I am writing you about Vermont's proposed bill H629, which seeks to give adoptees access to their original birth certificates. I understand that you might not care about my out of state opinion, but before I am dismissed as irrelevant, I will note the following:

I am an Associate Executive Director of the Adoptive and Forster Family Coalition of New York and we represent the voices of all foster, adoptive and kinship families in the state, this includes our adopted citizens.

Beginning in 2006, I personally as a volunteer have worked on Adoptee Rights and OBC access legislation across the nation. Later with the support of the Coalition, I have worked on passing a preferred (no restrictions) legislation in successfully in New York.

I myself have relinquished a child to adoption and have been a birth mother for over 30 plus years. My son and I work with advocacy groups in Massachusetts where his birth certificate is sealed as there is legislation pending in that state. We are connected to all the major adoptees rights advocacy groups and activist across the nation and beyond. What happens in one state does affect the efforts in others.

I understand that the House Judiciary Committee just completed holding hearings on this vital issue and the committee had scheduled three witnesses, but not one of them was an actual adopted adult who is affected by this legislation. In fact, it has been brought to my attention that the adopted citizens of Vermont have asked to be given a seat at the table to give live testimony have been turned down from both in person and virtual testimony.

I cannot empathize to you how insulting, infantilizing and wrong this is.

This is a matter of equity and inclusion. Adoptees are already a marginalized group, who do not enjoy the same rights as the non-adopted, hence this needed legislation (which really could be drastically improved as restrictions are not acceptable either!!). For representatives to have a

NEW YORK CITY: 3114 Mermaid Avenue, 4th Floor | Brooklyn, NY, 11224 | 718-570-5134

HUDSON VALLEY: 108 Main Street, Suite 5 | New Paltz, NY, 12561 | 646-688-4321

LONG ISLAND: 21 Greene Avenue | Amityville, NY, 11701 | 631-598-1983

CENTRAL NEW YORK: 950 Danby Road, Suite 318 | Ithaca, NY, 14850 | 607-272-0034

conversation about the very citizens for whom are supposed to have benefited without bothering to hear them, is further marginalizing and diminishing their voices.

In New York in 2017, we had a bill that was also not quite good enough and while it was passed by our legislators, the Governor listened to adopted voices from all over the country and vetoed the bill. In Governor Cuomo's veto memo, he directed that all the stakeholders, including and especially the adult adoptees, come to the table to find an acceptable solution. That meeting occurred in early 2018 and by November of 2019, that bill, that was perfection created together, was signed into law. What had been the state with one of the most restrictive laws in the country became the state with the BEST adoptee OBC access and by best estimates from the state, over 20,000 New York citizens have exercised their rights to be treated equally.

H629 is NOT a bill that adoptee rights advocates in this country accept nor want to see passed, but you won't know that or understand that unless you listen to the adopted voices. Not their adoptive parents, not the adoption agencies, not the adoption attorneys and not even to the mothers, like myself, who relinquished their rights (and have no right to privacy nor need any mythological protection) . This legislation is supposed to help the adopted citizens and if you don't hear them, you are wasting your time and actually making ALL our efforts more difficult.

I implore you to allow adopted citizens such as Rebecca Dragon, who represents three adoptee advocacy organizations to testify at any and all future hearings. Repair your errors and call back the most needed voices that you so carelessly dismissed. I beg you to listen to such true adopted experts as Greg Luce or Adoptee Rights Law, Bastard Nation and Adoptees United. And I promise you that when we form the New England Adoptee Rights Coalition, we will be so loud you cannot dismiss our voices ever again.

Your bill is not acceptable and you need to listen to the people it will affect to make it work.

Sincerely,



Claudia Corrigan D'Arcy  
Associate Executive Director of Communications  
Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of New York