

169 Mountain View Drive
Newport, VT 05855

February 10, 2022

Dear Legislative Committee:

I am a 67 year old, native Vermonter and retiree from Vermont State Service having worked for Vermont Department of Children and Families as a Child Protection Services Social Worker for 27 years. I am also an adult adoptee, born in 1954, who has been denied access to my adoption records, including my birth certificate for almost 50 years.

My records have been denied to me because I was born before 1986 according to statute. Should I desire the records I will have to petition the Probate Court and "have just cause" to do so and I will need the consent of several parties, ie., birth parents, adoptive parents, siblings, etc. Without having access to my records, how would I get consent from birth parents and siblings? Additionally, both of my adoptive parents are deceased. I wonder who the sealed records are protecting, if not me.

I do not understand how I can be denied access to my birth records because of my age. If anything, I am more mature and capable of dealing with the information. I do not feel it is fair to me to be required to obtain a court order to acquire my records and that I must have sufficient cause to do so.

Additionally, DNA tests have revealed birth families all over the world. Keeping adoption records sealed from those who need the records is not only abusive and frustrating, it is archaic as well. Secrecy of this nature permits deception.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Judith A. O'Connor

