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**March 8, 2022**

**Vermont House Committee on Judiciary**

**% Amber Burke**

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**Re: Bill H.629**

**Members of the Committee:**

The Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship is comprised of agencies, groups, and parents from around the state who have joined together for a common purpose, to support Vermont's families formed through adoption or guardianship.

The Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship recognizes that adoption and guardianship of children are lifelong processes with rewards and challenges. Therefore, we are committed to partnering with individuals, families and communities to further the knowledge and understanding the needs of children when they are being raised by someone other than their birth parents. The Consortium strives to ensure that all people whose lives have been touched by adoption and guardianship have access to quality support services throughout Vermont.

The Vermont Consortium for Adoption and Guardianship Private Agency Committee acknowledges that, historically, adoption practice and policy in Vermont caused unintentional harm to adoptees, prioritizing the comfort of adoptive parents without consideration for adoptees and other members of the adoption constellation. We are carefully following the testimony and consideration of proposed bill H.629 by the Vermont House Judiciary Committee and staying mindful of its potential effects on members of the adoption constellation. In particular, we acknowledge the tremendous impact that changes to current law could make towards empowering the adopted person community, and also the potential impact they could have on some birth parents. Current and evidence-based best practice in adoption speaks to common issues that can be faced by adoptees and other members of the adoption community throughout their life due to the loss that is central to all adoptions and the past secrecy common in adoption history. In light of this research, and in the context of this bill, the Consortium firmly believes that adoptees should have access to their original birth certificate.

Sincerely,

The Vermont Consortium for Adoption & Guardianship Private Agency Committee