

Thank you so much for hearing our testimony. I was given hope that we were heard, and that means more than you can know.

I would like to send you a few resources, and I also have a request specifically for the committee members that arrived late to the hearing and did not hear the bulk of our testimony. So I will start with that. Will you please watch the testimony and discussion in its entirety before commenting further on this bill, and what you may want or not want to do with it? I believe that if you listen to what we said, you will understand why a working group is not appropriate in this matter. I do agree, wholeheartedly, that working groups are essential in solid law and policy making, especially when those laws and policies would affect a wide diversity of people. However, this is not the case here. There is only one affected party here: a marginalized group who is seeking a civil right that they are deprived of that is offered to all other citizens. VT adoptees gaining access to their own records is something that is only about the adoptee. This is a matter of equity. If you watch our testimony, I believe you will grasp this fully and agree.

Now, on to resources. I mentioned a Ted Talk that goes over the issues adoptees encounter because of the amended birth certificate (and why we should have access to a certified original). I am attaching that talk here. Some states have opened their records since this talk, but the information is still relevant. It is short, but impactful: <https://youtu.be/POVRCjgv0Io>

Secondly, I have created two documents to help you understand how DNA searching works presently. If you would like to hear from a search angel, I know several of them who have done this work to help thousands of adoptees find their families. Understanding this process, and how legislation cannot be crafted to prevent this process from happening (barring outlawing DNA testing and consensual DNA matching altogether).

Lastly, I watched your discussion after we left. Two comments there:

1. It would be my pleasure to drive to Montpelier to meet IN PERSON with anyone who wishes. I can come on Monday. (I heard this idea mentioned) I believe that other adoptees would also come and meet as well. A road trip is always fun, and I remember a great little taco place there that motivates me further to head that way!
2. There was a comment about "broken hearted adoptive parents" at the end. Let me say this as strongly as possible: I will be 50 years old this year. I am not a child. I do not "owe" my adoptive parents something. There is no debt that I incurred when they adopted me. As a mother to three teenagers, I can attest to having my heart broken, frequently. Let's imagine a grown adult wants to marry someone, but their parents don't like the person and are "broken hearted". Would we create laws giving parents the right to stop the wedding? If I needed my childhood medical records, should I be able to contact a doctor directly and receive them, or would I need my parent's permission to access those documents? If you would give adoptive parents "voice" into the matter as an "equal party" to the question at hand: should adoptees have unfettered access to their own records without interference?" you are treating us as perpetual children, who are in eternal debt without equal rights. Why? To prevent their "hearts from being broken"? This is a clear example why people who have benefited financially and personally from the facilitation of adoptions and the legal transfer of children (and subsequent sealing of their records) should be given NO voice in this matter. It is a clear conflict of

interest. This kind of infantilizing language, and words such as "triad" and "both sides" are industry and marketing words that refer to us as commodities and infer equity that DOES NOT EXIST. It is this kind of language and perspective that would see the adopted person only through the value they bring to the adoptive parents (was the product "good" or "bad"?). Adoptive parents and adoption facilitators are the parties with the most privilege and power in adoption. Bringing them to the table would be bringing privileged people in as "the other side" to marginalized groups seeking equitable treatment in the eyes of the law.

I would welcome a personal conversation with Xusana Davis, as I believe with conversation, she would fully understand this if she does not already. Although this matter is not always one of race (although there is much intersection with racial inequity in adoption, and in many ways is at the core of its current practice), adopted persons are a marginalized group in a myriad of ways, most notably in having codified laws that would make us second class citizens. Please urge her to watch our testimony as well.

Again, thank you so much. I know that this may likely be the first time many of you have been presented with an authentic perspective directly from an adoptee speaking outside of the mainstream narrative. It means everything to be listened to, and to have our lived experiences be given the leading voice in this issue, not legislators, not adoption facilitators, not adoptive parents, and not birth parents.

Thank you,

Rebecca Dragon