

BY US MAIL AND EMAIL

January 21, 2020

Chairman Dale Kooyenga
Senate Committee on Universities,
Technical Colleges, Children and Families
P.O. Box 7882
Madison WI 53707

Chairwoman Jessie Rodriguez
Assembly Committee on Family Law
PO Box 8952
Madison WI 53708

RE: SB521 and AB579

Dear Chairman Kooyenga, Chairwoman Rodriguez, and Members of Each Committee:

We are national and state-level organizations that represent tens of thousands of adult adoptees in Wisconsin and across the country. We do not support AB579 and SB521. These bills are misplaced and should not move forward.

While we fully understand that these bills seek the release of information in instances where a specific court-related form exists in an adoptee's vital records file, the obvious intent is to get around current laws that deny equality for adult adopted people in the State of Wisconsin. "Getting around" that issue means releasing a court form with limited information instead of releasing a copy of the adult adopted person's *own vital record*, which Wisconsin law impounds after an adoption and replaces it with an amended record (though, as in many states, adoptive parents in Wisconsin may choose whether or not to request an amended record¹).

We do not support AB579 and SB521. We ask that the committee set the bills aside and not act upon them further. We would rather engage in a more honest discussion over the real issue: whether Wisconsin---like ten other states in the country, including New York just days ago---will restore a right of all people to obtain one's *own birth record*, a right that all adult adopted people in Wisconsin and in the United States once had.

¹ Wisconsin law provides that no new birth certificate be established if "the adoptive parents or the subject of the adoption requests, under § 48.94 (1), that no new record be prepared." Wis. Stat. s. 69.15(2)(a). Section 48.94(1)—which is part of Wisconsin's adoption law—provides that no new birth record should be filed if so requested by the adoptive parents.

We urge you to reject the misplaced approach of SB521/AB579 and work with advocates and others to address the inequality that exists in Wisconsin's vital records law. Dancing around current law, as AB579 and SB521 attempts to do, will not meaningfully address that inequality.

We look forward to your action in setting the current bills aside and working with you on a different bill that restores equality to adult adopted people in the state. We will also update this letter as additional organizations join us in making this request.

Best regards,

ADOPTEE RIGHTS LAW CENTER

Gregory D. Luce, Attorney and Founder

BASTARD NATION: THE ADOPTEE RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

Marley Greiner, Executive Chair

AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS

Tim Monti-Wohlpart, National Legislative Chair

NEW YORK ADOPTEE RIGHTS COALITION

Annette O'Connell, Spokesperson

TEXAS ADOPTEE RIGHTS COALITION

Shawna Hodgson, Spokesperson

Additional Groups and Organizations to be Added

Replies/Inquiries:

Gregory D. Luce
Adoptee Rights Law Center PLLC
4629 1st Ave S
Minneapolis MN 55419
(612) 221-3947
greg@adopteerightslaw.com