



April 27, 2021

The Honorable Dominick Ruggiero
President of the Senate
Rhode Island State Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence RI 02903

The Honorable Michael McCaffrey
Senate Majority Leader
Rhode Island State Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

The Honorable Mary L. Goodwin
Senate Majority Whip
Rhode Island State Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence RI 02903

RE: Support for Senate Bill 250

Dear Senate President Ruggiero, Senate Majority Leader McCaffrey, and Senate Majority Whip Goodwin:

We represent a broad and diverse constituency of organizations and people involved in adoption, whether adopted people, birthparents, adoptive parents, or family members.

We write to express strong support for SB250. The bill reflects common-sense measures that secure equality for all adopted people born in Rhode Island.

SB250 does three primary things:

First, for adopted people born prior to July 1, 2021, it lowers the age at which the person may request his or her own birth record, from 25 to 18. This reflects the practical reality of being an adult in Rhode Island at age 18.

Second, it provides a right for direct-line descendants of an adoptee to request the original birth record if the adopted person is deceased. Increasingly, the sons, daughters, grandchildren, and even great grandchildren of an adopted person have a simple request: to complete a family's story and know the full scope of that family's

heritage and history. In states where direct-line descendants do not have such rights, descendants must rely on piecing information together through DNA analysis, archival research, professional genealogists, or requesting court orders. SB250 levels the genealogical playing field for everyone and allows, when the adopted person is deceased, a son or daughter or other descendant to obtain a record of the family's heritage.

Finally, for adopted people born on or after July 1, 2021, it allows the person to request his or her own original birth record as of the date of birth. With the vast majority of adoptions today following a more “open” concept, this is a necessary and overdue change. More importantly, it works to destigmatize adoption and to reduce the unnecessary and harmful secrecy that has surrounded adoption for decades. People are not secrets. And as the author Gabrielle Glaser recently wrote in her book *American Baby: A Mother, a Child, and the Shadow History of Adoption*, adoptions in the past began “with an erased past, facts replaced with myths.” SB250’s provision for more transparency for adopted people makes the recorded past available and preserves facts as real and known, to be handled as we handle all things human. That is solid progress for the people of Rhode Island.

We urge you to bring SB250 forward for a vote before the full Senate. It is a common sense bill that recognizes the inherent dignity, worth, and rights of adopted people and their families.

Best regards,

Nancy Horgan

ACCESS RHODE ISLAND

Rebekah Henson

NEW ENGLAND ADOPTEE RIGHTS

Gregory D. Luce

ADOPTEE RIGHTS LAW CENTER PLLC and ADOPTEES UNITED INC.

Marley Greiner

BASTARD NATION: THE ADOPTEE RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

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Annette O'Connell

NEW YORK ADOPTEE RIGHTS COALITION

Shawna Hodgson

TEXAS ADOPTEE RIGHTS COALITION

Peggy Klappenberger

CAPITOL COALITION FOR ADOPTEE RIGHTS

Susie Stricker

MARYLAND ADOPTEE RIGHTS

Adam Pertman

NATIONAL CENTER ON ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY

Deborah Myers

CONCERNED UNITED BIRTHPARENTS

Penelope Needham

MINNESOTA COALITION FOR ADOPTION REFORM

Peter Franklin

ADOPTEES WITHOUT LIBERTY (AWOL)