

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Health
For HB 2006

Compiled on: Monday, April 3, 2023 6:00 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: April 3, 2023 9:00 AM

Andrea Godbold

Self - homeschool stay at home mom
Tomball, TX

As a foster to adopt parent, this would mean my first adopted child could finally have her original birth certificate. Her sisters have theirs because I learned about this ridiculous law after our first adoption. She should have her original birth certificate just like her sisters. I know many foster to adopt parents in the same situation. Children who are adopted have enough losses. There's no reason this should be taken away from them as well. It's a part of who they are, the very begging of themselves. Don't keep that from people.

Jill Witherspoon

self
SAN ANTONIO, TX

I respectfully request that HB2006 be approved with a DO PASS recommendation.

Stephen Oswalt

Self / Retired
Austin, TX

I am in favor of this bill.

Brian Witherspoon

ASW Plasterworks LLC
San Antonio, TX

I respectfully request that HB2006 be approved with a DO PASS recommendation.

Sharon Ferguson
Self - design drafter
Richmond, TX

Hello - I am an adult adoptee, born in the late 1960s. My birthmother was a college student in Houston when she became pregnant with me and turned me over to the state. Identity issues dont just matter for a young child: they matter for an adult like me, especially when I have had children of my own and cannot answer questions. Although reunion with my birthparents did answer some questions, having the records relating to my adoption would confirm for those entities that give importance to family history, especially medical and legal (such as obtaining a passport to simply go on a cruise.) Paperwork may not seem much until it does matter to these entities; it is disheartening to discover that adoptees like me cannot penetrate the wall that others pass through so easily when it comes to this. On top of that, it is these legitimate records that will verify and ameliorate any information we do get through reunion which sometimes is not as accurate as you would think. I have never been in trouble with the law. I have always paid my taxes. I own property and plan for my future with my husband. I took care of my dying adoptive mom. Why am I not able to access the records relating to me, then, when I have proven I am NOT a "danger" to society? Even if the papers do not answer any of my questions the fact that I am not able to access them as easily as a non-adopted person has me wondering at the secrets that are perpetuated anyway. It doesnt make sense and it causes a great deal of anxiety. I love my country. Why would my country treat me as a questionable danger when the worst thing I have done is be born as "illegitimate"? Seems unfair that I have to pay a price for something that others have done. At least give me the chance to have a voice after all this time. Thank you for your consideration! Sharon Ferguson

Susan Stephens Brown
Self, Retired teacher
Austin, TX

I have no access to my birth certificate. I tried, with the help of my parents, at 18 to get one. No judge would grant me access because my reasons weren't good enough...not that they told me what reason was good enough. I'm older (56) and it should not hurt after all these years, but it still does. Texas would let me vote and be an adult, but would not allow me to find out who I was or where I came from.

I love my family for sure, and that would not change. I've lost both of my parents. They were older when they adopted me. They were thrilled since the doctors told them the chances were low of them ever having a baby. Not long after, my brother came along. We were miracles. They never hid adoption from me or treated me differently than my brother.

I did look completely different. I was short with brown hair and brown eyes. They were all tall, fair skinned, with black hair and blue eyes. I would have figured it out eventually. They were honest with me so there wasn't a problem. I have friends that were adopted and they were so upset when they found out. It used to be treated as shameful to be adopted, I guess. I'm happy my family didn't see it that way.

it would be nice to know who I am biologically. It would be great to know medically what family issues to be aware of and to have my children be aware of them, too. I really hope this bill finally passes. It has been too long. Texas needs to do something for all of its adopted children.

Susan Stephens Brown

Richard Slaughter, Mr
Self - Communications Consultant
San Antonio, TX

I support this bill with my whole heart, my mind, and believe the right of self is one of our most precious possessions. The passage of this bill means adults who were adopted will be able to request and receive their original birth certificate sealed by the state. My friends will finally know their truth. They will know their medical, genealogical, and family history.

In our state when a person is born and relinquished or is a ward of the state by judicial means and never adopted they are treated equally in regards to having access to their original birth certificate. If the child is never adopted, after relinquishment, the adult person has the right to receive their original birth certificate.

When a child is adopted, then and only then, is the original birth certificate sealed. Birth certificates are not sealed upon relinquishment. Birth certificates are only sealed by adoption. But for the act of adoption alone. This, by itself, proves anyone giving up a child has no right to expect privacy. This means the birth mother has no claim to privacy from their child. The vast majority of birth mothers want to know their children. And, judges have stated they do not have the right to keep a mother and child separate. There is nothing in the United States Constitution or in the relinquishment document giving any party privacy. And, this holds true across our entire country. Anyone who makes this promise of privacy or says that no one will ever know does so with impunity and without authority! Especially with the advent of low-cost home DNA testing. Technology has passed this antiquated 1957 law.

And, the child who may be adopted retains their original birth name until the adoptive parent/s requests a name change in their Application of Adoption.

I am not an adoptee. However, my mother was. She was a beautiful and intelligent person who died at 34 years of age due to the lies and secrecy of adoption. This affected my life and others who were associated with her in her short life. Secrecy and lies caused alcohol addiction, drug addiction, and murder. What is ironic is that her original was never sealed, never amended, and she was never given a new birth certificate. It took me two years of intense searching to find her birth families. Adoptees should not have to go through this. More on this when I give my testimony. Thank you.

Julie Moscarelli
Self/Nurse
Houston, TX

Thank you Cody for bringing this to the forefront and much respect for being an adoptive dad realizing the importance of this. People need to know who their biological family is regardless of whether reuniting is the desired outcome. Life changing since DNA provided my answers and I feel strongly everyone is entitled to their own birth circumstances.

Laura Cottam Sajbel, Ms
Self
Austin, TX

Having a first cousin who was adopted, I have seen personally the importance of adults having access to their birth records—for medical history and for personal closure. If Texas is encouraging women to carry all pregnancies to term, this bill takes on additional significance, because Texas will have more adoptees by necessity. Knowing about genetic traits and health conditions is helpful to anyone, and adoptees deserve to have that same access.

Becky Banasik
Self
Austin, TX

Please vote yes for thiz

Beth Martinez
Self
Austin, TX

Please support the right for adoptees to have access to their original birth certificate.

Lorraine DeHaas

Adopted relatives of my own

Austin, TX

I am in support of Hb 2006. I have several relatives that are adopted, as well as friends, and would love to see them to have access to any and all important information with regards to any and all information regarding health, mental health or other important familial information

Miriam Luetje

Self, nurse

AUSTIN, TX

I am in support of this bill and urge the committee members to vote YES for the bill.

Michelle Lehman

Self

Austin, TX

Please support HB 2006 so that adult adoptees have access to birth records, thus providing them with vital information about their health history and genetics which will allow them to better maintain their health, have awareness of any genetic issues that they might have and that they might pass along to their children.

Thank you.

Laura Ashley McLain

Self

Austin, TX

I am an adult child of adoption (1968) who just found my birth family through the adoption agency. If I did not have their information, I would want and deserve the right to find my original birth certificate to seek out my biological family. It is past time to bring this to a vote!

Susannah Rolf, Ms.

Self

Missouri City, TX

Members of the Committee: I am an adoptive parent to two daughters born in the state of Texas in addition to a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Thank you to all the members who have sponsored this Bill. I am writing in support for passing this recommendation. I am in support of my children having access to their basic family history through access to their original birth certificates. Shortly after their birth, I attempted to obtain copies of their unamended birth certificates but was unable to do so due to current policy regarding who can access it. As a mental health professional, I believe it is unwise to deprive individuals of their own basic information. Having access to one's personal history and information is imperative for a myriad of reasons including medical history and mental health history. The practice of amending and denying original birth certificate's is archaic. Please support this resolution.

Kim Mcpherson, Ms

Self

Austin, TX

Please support. It's important for adoptees to have access to their own information, particularly to be able to know of medical risks.

Kimberley Mead

Self

Austin, TX

As an adopted person myself, I can tell you that this is essential for us to have access to our records. Access to these records would allow us to manage our lives and our health in a way that non-adopted people take for granted.

The added gatekeeping, undue processes, and financial burdens for an adult to pursue their heritage and their genetic background is unconscionable. The added expense of testing for everything and anything that might medically happen to us is uncalled for and harmful.

I fully support this bill.

Kim-Marie Hernandez-O'Driscoll, PhD

Self/Psychologist

Austin, TX

One of my dearest friends, by accessing the medical records of her birth parents, was able to find out that she had the predisposition of a specific life-threatening cancer. Knowing this information ended up saving her life. Adult adoptees should have this kind of life saving opportunity. It should be a right. I support HB 2006 and urge the committee to vote yes. Thank you!

Kristen Henry

Self/family-- adoptive mother

Katy, TX

I'm writing to request that HB2006 be approved with a DO PASS recommendation.

As an adoptive parent, I support adoptees' rights to their own vital records without additional restrictions. For too long, adopted people's right to their own information was limited by the preferences of those who made decisions for them as infants or children. I believe this is an equal rights issue for people like my daughter, and am following the progress of this bill closely with the hope that my representatives will support equal rights for all adopted persons born in Texas.

I'm grateful to the Texas Adoptee Rights Coalition for getting the word out about this bill; they would be a great resource if you're looking for more information on the need for equal access to vital records for adoptees.

Thank you for your time,

Kristen Henry

Terri Manor

Self/Former Educator

Brazoria, TX

I was adopted from Homestead, and went home when I was 4 days old. My adoptive parents had no idea that I would have phenomenal health issues as I grew to adulthood. I had pituitary/adrenal issues at age 5, and faced many social issues because of my size at that age, and for many years. At 10yrs, I was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, not Juvenile, and couldn't take any insulin or oral meds at the time. By age 11, I developed Necrobiosis Lipoidica, and was the only 11 yr old in the country to have it. It normally affected 40+ yr old Scandinavian women. At 14, the disease had caused my circulation to almost stop, and I developed gangrene and my legs were about to be amputated.

My mother, an RN, had religiously and tenaciously tried everything she could do contacting all the people in charge of opening the adoption records to get any medical records to help these doctors make my life better. Especially, when the Necrobiosis got worse over time. My life would not have been nearly this excruciatingly painful, if my original birth certificate and medical records had been available.

STACIE HOLT

self

smithville, TX

All adopted people should have the same access to their birth records as all other people. They deserve equal access to all the information about their lives, from day one.

Michael Henry

Self - Minister

Katy, TX

As an adoptive parent, I believe strongly that every child has a right to know where they came from and deserve access to their own birth records.

Melanie Greene

self, tech consultant

AUSTIN, TX

I am in support of HB 2006 and urge the committee to vote yes. Adult adoptees deserve to know basic information about their birth parents.

Naomi Hanser, Dr.

Self

Austin, TX

Adult adoptees should have access to all records pertaining to them, including birth certificates, birth records. Family medical history is crucial to healthcare and mental healthcare. Please vote Yes.

Krista Ernst

Self

Austin, TX

I am in support of HB 2006. Please vote yes

Mary Ann Hayley

self/retired

Paradise, TX

Everyone should have access to the knowledge of their biological roots. And, family medical history. There is nothing more rewarding than that piece of paper. I keep a copy of mine at my computer. HB2006 should be approved with a DO PASS recommendation.

Georgina Biehle

Self

Lexington, TX

I am a 58 yo woman who has tried for years to get original BC to no avail..I don't want anything from anybody other than medical info...I have things wrong with me that drs have told me is inherited...and now my daughter is having medical issues. It would be nice to know where this is coming from and is there something else that is hiding in the dark that's gonna pop up and it would be nice if I could know what to watch for. Thank you for reading my comments and please help us adoptees that only want answers...no one should be in the dark

Anita Stoll
self
Austin, TX

I request that HB2006 be approved with a DO PASS recommendation. As an adoptive parent, I strongly believe that adoptees should have the right to obtain their original birth certificate without restrictions or alterations. This can only benefit an adult adoptee who is seeking to have this part of their history. Thank you.

Richard K. Jordan
Self retired
Leander, TX

Please approve HB2006 with a DO PASS vote. I am a 66yr old adoptee who deserves to have his birth records the same as every Texan. I know exactly who my Birth parents are, where they live etc... Yet I cannot obtain my records due to outdated law. In this age of DNA transparency there are no secrets. It's time to change. Thank you.

Melissa Harvey
Self
Farmers Branch, TX

HB 2006's passing is a long-overdue one, giving the same rights to adult adoptees, given every other Texan regarding birth record accessibility. To regard adult adoptees as incapable of responsibly attaining THEIR own original record of birth is blatant discrimination, treating them as incompetent, irresponsible or ignorant.

In regards to reunion, as with any other relationship, it would be decided upon by both parties, and respected as in any other relationship, with laws that are already in place to give each individual the right to decline such relationship. This matter has little to do with such issues, as proven in the many states that have already passed such bills.

To have your OBC (original birth certificate- NOT modified with false information regarding ones own birth) means that an adult adoptee has the truth about their own birth, with a date and place of birth. The name(s) listed give an adult adoptee a sense of being and truth. I have received mine (through roundabout means), which included fees, as with obtaining any other state record. There is an undue fear of the "what ifs" by non-adoptees, with no regard for the adult adoptee.

I highly recommend passing HB 2006, and would expect this decades' fought-for Bill to pass in 2023! It is time to make adoptees' rights considered legal rights, and not a whimsical want. There are no legal arguments that suggest that broken dreams of adopters or birth parents are protected by law, while withholding vital, private information for the adult adoptees, provided by the RIGHT to obtain one's own OBC! Please put your fears of the what-ifs aside, and allow Texas Citizens the basic right to obtain one's own vital record of birth, no matter the circumstances FOLLOWING such a personal, yet consequential event of record.

Thank you for listening to my perspective on this matter.

Sincerely,
Melissa Alsbury Harvey
Given name at birth, Michele Anne Bergman

Darla Denise Cole
Self/STAR
College Station, TX

As an adoptee and a birth mother my perception may be different from other adoptees. I have been searching for over 20 years for my birth mother and many years for the child I placed. Both journeys have been daunting and discouraging.

As a birth mother I was never promised anonymity, that I would never be found or searched for. Who could make that promise in good faith? The legal documents I signed in 1984, when I relinquished my child, only took my rights away. There was nothing in them to protect me from someone else searching for me someday and that was fine. I do not need protection from the state of Texas for a choice I made willingly. I have the right to choose if I want to have a relationship with another adult, be it a blood relation or a complete stranger, even if they are the same person. That is my right as a human being who can exercise free will. As time passed I hoped the child I placed would be curious and look for me. And maybe they have, but the roadblocks of searching are intimidating and I would not blame them if they gave up.

Sealed records in Texas infringes upon my free will and rights by making the decisions for me. Current law also leaves out an important part of the adoption triad; the adoptee. As an adoptee, being denied access to my own information is unjustified and irrational. The adoptee completes the triad and should have just as much of a right to personal and vital information as everyone else in our society.

Texas denies me my free will, as an adoptee and as a birth parent. We cannot legislate relationships. Everyone has the right to decline having a relationship with whomever they choose. The Texas Senate can allow free will in adoption cases or it can return to the early 20th century, the 1930's and keep everyone in the dark, hiding all the secrets that no one should be ashamed of.

Respectfully,

Darla Denise Cole

Simran Gutierrez, Dr
Self - Physical Therapist
Austin, TX

I am the mother of two adoptees and I strongly feel that it is their inherent right to have access to their original birth certificate. They should have access to their full medical history, and without knowledge of their biology, they are unable to access that. Adoption is where the child has no option, no say, no voice in who they live with and the community in which they're raised. I want my children to know I support their journey in finding and knowing their original family - it might save their life.

Roger Shanzer, Mr.
Self
La Vernia, TX

I am 79 years old and it is very important to me that I find out who my birth father was. I need to know if there are any hereditary issues I should be concerned about and if anything can be carried down to my children and grandchildren. I was able to locate my birth mother through DNA but by the time I found that out she had already died from cancer. At 79, what harm is it going to cause by providing me with my actual birth certificate? I don't care what kind of fee I have to pay to get that information. Other states provide that information, why is Texas making this so difficult? Who are you trying to protect? Yes, I do agree that there should be some time limit before that information is given out, but, 79 years is a little excessive.

Jennifer Davis
Self
Austin, TX

As someone with several friends who are adopted, I think that we should do everything we can to MAXIMIZE the accessibility of adoption records -- fees will only prove a barrier to folks who may not be able to find the money. Please keep adoption records as accessible as possible.

Jessica Havard

Self elementary school social worker

Everman, TX

This enactment would mean the world to my best friend and her family, which includes her adopted son.

Ronda Baldwin

Self

Gainesville, TX

Please pass this bill. As an adoptee, finding my birth family, I was able to know my substantial medical history.

Carol Martin

self

Austin, TX

I urge you to support HB 2006 which relates the equal rights for adoptees by allowing them access to the original birth certificates. Every person has the right to be informed about their genetic medical history - it makes a difference in getting the appropriate health care. Please do the humane thing and support this bill.

Sheila Zeitner

n/a

Katy, TX

Regarding HB 2006, I support the right of Texas-born adoptees to obtain their original pre-adoption birth certificate at the age of 18, without restrictions.

Sharon Cloninger

Support Texas Adoptee Rights (STAR)

Austin, TX

My name is Sharon Cloninger. I'm the biological grandmother of a bright and beautiful 22-year-old who was adopted at birth by wonderful parents. While we did not know about her or meet her—the first of our six grandchildren—until she was 9 years old, we're very grateful that her adoptive parents have welcomed us into their family, sort of adopting us too.

Currently, adopted Texans such as my granddaughter don't have the same access to their original birth certificate as non-adopted Texans do. Even within the adoption community, access is not equal.

Let me explain. To access an original birth certificate under existing law, an adopted Texan must either (1) obtain a court order or (2) know the name(s) of their birth parent(s). Neither method is required for non-adopted Texans. Within the adoption community, each method results in unequal access.

Under the first method, a petition for a court order is filed in the county of adoption. Using the "good cause" standard, a judge decides whether to grant the petition. But the standard is somewhat subjective. As you can imagine, results vary across Texas's 254 counties. Some petitions are granted; other similar petitions are denied. Regardless, the adopted person must expend time and money that non-adopted Texans are not required to expend. And adopted persons who do not have the time and money are foreclosed from pursuing this option.

The second method for access is to provide the name(s) of birth parent(s) to Vital Statistics when applying for the original birth certificate. Not all adopted persons know the names of their biological parents. Under the current system, those who know the name(s) have a greater right to their original birth certificate than those who don't.

Being adopted shouldn't relegate a Texas-born adult to second-class citizenship. I'm hopeful for the day when adopted persons like my granddaughter will have the same rights that my non-adopted grandchildren have, when all adult Texans will be treated equally under the law.

Enactment of HB 2006 would ensure equal access to original birth certificates for adopted persons both within the adoption community and among all Texans. I respectfully ask that you vote "yes" for HB 2006.

Carla Moore

I am representing myself.

LUBBOCK, TX

I am very much for the HB2006. I am an adopted child. My mother died in 1960. Daddy remarried in 1962. He adopted my stepmother's three boys and she adopted my brother and me. I didn't mind being adopted but was surprised when I found my birth certificate was changed to show her as my mother. As adults, my siblings and I have all thought about getting a copy of our original birth certificates. I would say that I would prefer a certified copy with something that indicated it was my original certificate but not my current. Please consider there are many people that may know one of their birth parents but kept from knowing the other parent. I can see the need for the person to be 18, unless there was a physical condition that should have been revealed. Again I urge you to pass the bill.

CM

Emmett Peters

Seld

Austin, TX

I am in support of this bill. As a Texan I hope the committee will vote yes to push this bill through. :)

Suzanne Napier

No/a

Austin, TX

I support this bill and urge the committee to vote Yes.

Audrey Thompson

Executive Coach

Austin, TX

Please vote yes

Mia Tracy

Self

Wimberley, TX

I firmly support adoptees having access to birth records

Marley Greiner, Ms

Bastard Nation: the Adoptee Rights Organization

Corpus Christi, TX

Bastard Nation: the Adoptee Rights Organization (BN) is the largest adoptee civil rights organization in the United States. We support only full unrestricted rights for all adopted persons to their original birth certificates (OBC) and related documents. BN and its members in Texas have worked since the late 1990s to restore the right of all Texas-born adoptees to obtain a copy of their OBCs without restrictions or conditions. We are a core partner in the Texas Adoptee Rights Coalition. I live in Corpus Christi, but am unable to attend the April 3 hearing so I am submitting comments.

Since 2005 the state has released OBCs upon request only to TX adoptees, who know the name(s) of the parent(s) listed on the document. They are released without the knowledge or consent of those parents.

The vast majority of everyone else is forced to navigate a cumbersome, difficult, humiliating, and insulting gauntlet of restrictions, arbitrary legal procedures, and naysayers, and are almost always unsuccessful in their quest. The result of this discrimination is that adoptees are left to their own devices to obtain their own information through inexpensive DNA testing, social media, volunteer search angels, paid searchers, and their own perseverance.

Courts have ruled that adoption anonymity does not exist. (*Doe v Sundquist, et. al.*, 943 F. Supp. 886, 893-94 (M.D. Tenn. 1996) and *Does v. State of Oregon*, 164 Or. App. 543, 993 P.2d 833, 834 (1999)). Laws change constantly, and the state, lawyers, social workers, and others were never in a position to promise anonymity in adoption. In the 5+ years of the adoptee equality battle, not one document has been submitted anywhere that promises or guarantees sealed records and an anonymity "right" to birthparents.

Identifying information about surrendering parents appears in court documents given to adoptive parents who can at any point give that information to the adopted person. The names of surrendering parents are published in legal ads. Courts can open "sealed records" for "good cause" without birthparent consent or knowledge. Critically, the OBC is sealed at the time of adoption finalization, not surrender. If a child is not adopted, the record is never sealed. If a child is adopted, but the adoption is overturned or disrupted, the OBC is unsealed. The OBCs of persons with established relationships with biological parents as in stepparent and foster adoptions are also sealed.

The state has no interest in keeping original birth certificates sealed from adult adoptees to which they pertain. Nor does it have a right or duty to mediate and oversee the personal relationships of adults. Those who claim a statutory right to parental anonymity through sealed records promote statutory privilege and state favoritism. HB 2006 creates equal birth certificate rights for all Texas-born adoptees.

We urge DO PASS HB 2006.

Thomas Napier

N/A

Austin, TX

I support this bill and urge passage to extend these rights to adult adoptees.

Julie Krawietz

Self

Falls City, TX

Please pass this bill... we, as adopted adults, should have the rights to our birth certificates and all information pertaining to it.

Alison Macor, Dr.

Self/Author

Austin, TX

I am in support of HB 2006 and I strongly urge the committee to vote YES on this bill. Thank you for your consideration!

Liz Aston
Adoptees informaton records
Austin, TX

I support this bill and urge you to pass this bill

Mike Hall
self
austin, TX

I grew up in a family with two adopted siblings and I urge the committee to vote yes.

Mary Beth Wagner
Self
Hutto, TX

Please pass

Jann Baskett
Self
Austin, TX

I support HB 2096 for better health information for adult adoptees

Des Jacob
Self
Dallas, TX

Adopted persons are people and citizens too...

Posie Nicholson
Self
Cypress, TX

Do pass

victoria vlach
self
ausitn, TX

All people -- including adopted people -- should be able to obtain a copy of their *original* *unaltered* birth certificate. I strongly support the right of adoptees to know their full history and their right to obtain their original, unaltered birth certificate. An adopted person's biological family *does exist*. They exist despite being legally erased in amended birth certificates. An adopted person's biological/genetic heritage/history/family is always a part of them in some form. The existence of this background does not erase the love and care of parents who may not be biologically related to their child(ren), but this biological/genetic foundation is an integral part of that child's history, and influences many aspects of who they are/can/could be. Adopted people have a right to know their full story. Please pass this bill so that adopted people have the same rights as all other people born in Texas. Thank you.

Donna Rowe
Self - Retired
Hewitt, TX

I am a birth mother who gave her son up for adoption and I vehemently support HB 2006. I was not promised, nor did I want or request anonymity from my child. I do not want anonymity. I want my adult son to have access to a non-certified copy of his original birth certificate whenever he decides to request it. It should be his fundamental right to have this information. The great State of Texas should no longer keep Adult Adoptees from having access by treating them as second-class citizens.

Adult adoptees have been searching for their birth parents and locating them for a long period of time so having a non certified copy of one's own birth certificate is not about searching; it is about Adult Adoptee's having the same fundamental right as you and I.

Family medical history is constantly changing and has changed since he was adopted and he should have access to this medical information. The amended birth certificate is full of lies, for one thing it shows the adopted mother as having given birth.

I strongly urge you to vote for the passage of HB 2006 to the House Floor for a vote by the House of Representatives. Let's stop the secrets and lies that lie within adoption. Let's stop treating Adult Adoptees like they are second rate citizens for when there are secrets and lies they can and do come back to haunt you 99% of the time.

Thank you for reading this,
Donn Rowe

J.C. Schmeil
Self, architect
Austin, TX

As the spouse of an adopted person, I am in support of HB 2006 and urge the committee to vote in favor.

Susan Schoenbaechler, Mrs
Self
Georgetown, TX

Please pass

Catherine Crane
Self, retired education administrator
Austin, TX

I support this bill.

Rachel Farley
Self
Austin, TX

I am in favor of hb2006 and I urge the committee members to vote yes on this item. Thank you.

Jeff Mccord
KUTX
Austin, TX

I am in favor of this bill and strongly urge your support

Alicia Kay Lanier

Self

Irving, TX

Please DO PASS House Bill 2006! I am a Texas native who in 1966 surrendered a daughter to adoption in a San Antonio maternity home. I kept her birth and adoption secret for over two decades even from her three younger sisters.

When I finally decided to be truthful about my experience as a birthmother, I decided to help correct one of the biggest issues in adoption in our state: Secrecy and lies about adoptees' original birth certificates. Here's the truth: Each adoptee in any adoption in Texas – even for so-called “open” adoptions - has both an original birth certificate with their biological parents' names and also an amended (read: falsified) birth certificate which replaces the names of the original parents with those of the adoptive parents. The adoptee, when a birth certificate is required for any documentation, has only the amended (altered) version. The original (factual) birth certificate (OBC) was hidden away at the time of the adoption and no one - even the adult adoptee and all parties to the adoption - can access that document.

How would you feel if your birth certificate lied to you?

The birth parents become invisible, of course, when that birth certificate is altered. Some say this “protects” the birth parents. But I never felt the need to be protected from my daughter.

I never requested permanent privacy or confidentiality from my daughter either - not verbally or in writing - and, in fact, the adoption agency never asked me to sign a relinquishment of parental rights document, the customary best adoption practice of both that era and present day. Instead, the agency let my mother pick me up from the maternity home to go home – and then the agency went to court and declared my infant daughter “abandoned” by me. Nothing could have been further than the truth. I wanted only the best for her and carried her to term, intending for her to be adopted by a loving family

You may think HB 2006 will have limited impact on Texans, but that is untrue.

Texas was one of the first states to mandate secrecy in adoption; you may know the story of Fort Worth adoption advocate Edna Gladney on the floor of the Texas Legislature back in the 1930s urging adoption records be sealed. HB 2006 will impact 90 years of adoptees whose factual records are sealed, as well as their birth relatives, adoptive relatives, and all their descendants. That's a lot of Texans who will benefit.

In Texas, support for HB 2006 and giving adult adoptees unrestricted access to their original birth certificates is widespread; supporters include a majority of Texas adoptees and their descendants, birth parents, adoptive parents, others personally touched by adoption, adoption-related organizations, and numerous other individual and groups who believe that adoptees should no longer have their birth records arbitrarily sealed and locked away.

Please vote DO PASS for HB 2006.

Stacie Cleland

Self, Admin Specialist

AUSTIN, TX

As a birth mother, I am fully in support of this bill! Adoptees should absolutely have equal access to their birth records!

Brian PETERS

Self

Austin, TX

Please make this happen. Texas is preventing basic human rights.

Steven Hodgson
Self / President Southern Green LLC
Conroe, TX

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

I am a lifelong resident of Texas and the spouse of a Texas adoptee. For nearly 15 years I watched my wife struggle due to the complicated and discriminatory system in place that works to deny her and many other Texas adoptees a very basic right to personally identifying information. The toll this took on her and our family could have been avoided if Texas treated adopted people equally to non adopted people. The current scheme is absurd and as a non adopted person I cannot imagine the state barring me from my OWN information based on circumstances of my childhood that were beyond my control. Why , when my wife requests her own information, is she treated as less equal and deserving than I am? This is discriminatory and unacceptable. Texas must correct this law by enacting House Bill 2006. I urge you to vote yes to advance HB2006, a bill to restore equal rights to original birth certificates for all adopted Texans.

Steven C. Hodgson

Heather Ross
self
Conroe, TX

Every person has the right to access their own information which includes their original birth certificate.

Micahel Ross
self
Conroe, TX

DO PASS HB 2006. Adoptees should have access to their original birth certificate.

Paul Peters
Self
AUSTIN, TX

My mother is adopted

Monica Flores
Personal
Austin, TX

Pass this thing to safeguard health of adopted adults

Jill Parrish
Self
Austin, TX

All adult adoptees should have access to their original birth certificate!

Joellen Peters, Board President
Support Texas Adoptee Rights
AUSTIN, TX

This legislation has had overwhelming support in the House the past 2 times it was voted on. THANK YOU!!

Aside from this amazing demonstration of bipartisan support, a poll by Baselice & Associates (2021) showed that 77% of Texans support an adopted adults access to their original birth certificates. The time is NOW for adult adoptees to be treated like all other adults in the State of Texas.

Personally, I am an adopted person who got my medical history 23 years ago and learned that my biological father died from melanoma. Because of this my doctor ordered twice yearly skin checks with a dermatologist and in July 2022 during one of the skin checks, my doctor found a melanoma. It has since been removed; having the right to access my medical information saved my life this year. VITAL RECORDS ARE VITAL!

Please vote FOR HB 2006 and encourage other legislators to do the same.

Respectfully,

Joellen Peters

Jennifer Key
Self/Paramedic
Crowley, TX

My name is Jennifer Flowers/Key. I put my so yup for adoption in Waco TX (I'm pretty sure the date is correct) on March 21, 1981. I was having trouble in my life at that time, and felt I was unfit for raising a child! I did/do not believe in abortion and feel every child has right to life! I have been searching for him for many years. I worked ver hard to make my life profitable and productive and would like for him to know that I love him and thought I was doing the right thing at the time to give him a life that he deserved. I pray every day I made the right decision? I suppose I'll never know? I have filled the paperwork at the records office in Austin TX. I realize he also has the right to not be found, that's his choice. I would like to see this bill overturned in hopes that one day we can meet! I ask you to please make the right choice! Than You and GOD BLESS!

Lauron Fischer
Self
San Antonio, TX

I am an adult adoptee commenting to express my support of HB 2006. Currently the law discriminates against adult adoptees who wish to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate (OBC) by requiring us to provide the names of the parents listed on our OBC. This infringes on our own personal liberty, autonomy, dignity and privacy. To obtain my own OBC, I had to take a commercial DNA test and search for my birth parents, which exposed my DNA and identity to thousands of people also using these DNA services. It also exposed information about birth parents to their distant family members. It is much less invasive and more discreet to be able to request a document directly from the state government without having to involve anyone else. Adopted people can be trusted with their own vital records as much as those who are not adopted, and anyone should be able to access government documents of which they are the subject. I urge the committee and the legislature as a whole to support this bill and give adult adoptees equality under the law.

Joyce Horn, MS

STAR

Hewitt, TX

VITAL RECORDS ARE VITAL!

As an adoptive mother I am completely supportive of this bill granting adult adoptees access to their original birth certificate, if they so choose. Every adult adoptee in the state of Texas deserves access to a VITAL RECORD that is personal to them. A record that proves identity, existence, a map to medical, genetic, and ethnic history.

Throughout history Texans have faced many forms of discrimination and not having the same access as non-adopted people is 100% discrimination. It shows prejudice and inequality against the adopted person oftentimes leading to increased mental health issues such as anger, anxiety and depression. In some cases, there are other hures when obtaining a drivers license or passport, along with financial burdens for attorney fees, court fees, travel expenses, and lost wages when attempting to obtain a copy of their very own VITAL RECORD!

Thank you for support in showing the approximately 600,000 adopted Texans, many your very own constituents, you are voting to support an antiquated law, (1957).

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Joyce Horn

Thomas Cloninger

Self retired

Austin, TX

Please approve HB 2006!

Jana Lockaby

Jana Lockaby Retired

Kaufman, TX

I was adopted as an infant. At age 21, I was diagnosed with a hereditary eye disease called Retinitis Pigmentosa. Due to the diagnosis of this rare, eye disease, that has now caused the total loss of my sight, I was asked by doctors to inquire about my biological family medical history. I contacted the adoption agency and requested my non-identifying information. In 1987, I had gotten lucky with an agency counselor, an adoptee, and advocate for open records. With her help, I was able to find my birth mother, and thus get medical information, as well as other important questions answered.

At age 21, hearing an ophthalmologist, coldly, reveal that you have a hereditary eye disease that has no cure and causes blindness, is traumatic. As a young single woman hearing him say, "You should never have children," was devastating! Two years later, I found myself at the Retina Foundation of the Southwest, a research organization searching for a cure to Retinitis Pigmentosa. As they explained the amplified importance of family medical history in my case, my heart was once again broken. At the time, believing I would never know my biology, I told them I was adopted, and because of state law, had no way of getting that information. The non-identifying information that the state did allow me had no useful medical information.

The FDA has recently, approved a treatment for a specific gene type of Retinitis Pigmentosa. The Retina Foundation of the Southwest made it possible for me to have genetic testing for research purposes. I now know my specific RP diagnosis as Leber's Congenital Amaurosis, and gene type. For me however, it is still more complex. Instead of having two mutated genes of the same type, I have two different mutated genes. Because of this oddity, the Retina Foundation requested my biological parents be tested. With all the results back, I am qualified to participate in treatment trials. I believe, within the next 5 years, a treatment that could give me back my sight is possible. Knowing a cure is in sight, and, as an adoptee in a closed adoption, with no way of ever knowing my biology, I cannot imagine the heartbreak I would be experiencing right now if I had not gained access to my biological information! I am so thankful for the knowledge of my biology. Because of that, I have hope of someday seeing again! I remember, in 2009, reading about other states passing bills allowing adoptees access to their original birth certificates. This motivated me to inquire about receiving my own birth certificate as a Texas-born adoptee. In 2009, because I knew the exact names of my biological parents, I was able to get a copy of my non-certified, original birth certificate from Texas vital records. I vividly remember the day I received it in the mail. As I held it in my hand, I cried! For the first time in my life, I felt like I had been born. I felt real.

Please support HB2006 so all of my fellow Texas adoptees can feel the same satisfaction.

Andrea Edrington

Self

Austin, TX

I support this Bill HB2006.

Leigh Middleton

Self

San Antonio, TX

I support this bill and believe that adoptees should be treated equally under the law as non-adopted people and be able to obtain our own vital records.

Allen Horn, Mr.

Self, retiree and adoptive father

Hewitt, TX

I am an adoptive parent and completely support this bill in recognition of the simple fact that all people deserve access to their original birth certificate.

The existing law prevents adopted people from access to this vital information and was created when adoption was clouded with secrecy. It is long past time to bring this law into the modern era.

Thank you for your support and sponsorship.

Alyssa Grunden

self/stay at home parent

Fort Worth, TX

I support this bill, and believe that adoptees should be treated equally under the law as non-adopted people and be able to obtain their own vital records. Thank you for your time.

Mitchell Schaefer

Self, university student

Nacogdoches, TX

I support the passing of this bill, and believe that adoptees deserve equitable treatment under the law to non-adoptees. Adoptees should be able to access their own vital records, and the bill does not violate biological parents' rights to confidentiality.

Jenna San Miguel

Self

Mesquite, TX

Thank you!!!! <https://comments.house.texas.gov/home?c=c410>

I support this bill and VITAL RECORDS ARE VITAL!. Every adult adoptee in the state of Texas deserves access to a VITAL RECORD that is personal to them. A record that proves identity, existence, a map to medical, genetic, and ethnic history. Throughout history Texans have faced many forms of discrimination and not having the same access as non-adopted people is 100% discrimination. It shows prejudice and inequality against the adopted person oftentimes leading to increased mental health issues such as anger, anxiety and depression. In some cases, there are other hurdles when obtaining a drivers license or passport, along with financial burdens for attorney fees, court fees, travel expenses, and lost wages when attempting to obtain a copy of their very own VITAL RECORD!

Thank you for showing the approximately 600,000 adopted Texans, many your very own constituents, your support!

Cherie Ford
Self
Crawford, TX

I support bill HB2006 adopted persons have rights too

Erin Hodgson
Self
San Antonio, TX

I support adoptee equality and urge you to pass HB 2006.
- daughter of adoptee

Lauren Barry
Texas Adoptees
Kingwood, TX

I support adoptee equality and urge you to pass HB2006.

Lauren Barry, daughter of a Texas adoptee

Kayla Clarkson
Self. School psychologist
San Antonio, TX

I support adoptee equality and urge you to pass HB2006” or whatever you’d like to say. Just make sure it includes “pass HB2006

Linda Barry
Self
Spring, TX

I am adoptive mother of two children. I strongly support HB2006.

William Barry
Self
Spring, TX

I am an adoptive father of two children and support HB2006.

Becky Carrabine
Self
Austin, TX

VITAL RECORDS ARE VITAL!. Every adult adoptee in the state of Texas deserves access to a VITAL RECORD that is personal to them. A record that proves identity, existence, a map to medical, genetic, and ethnic history. Throughout history Texans have faced many forms of discrimination and not having the same access as non-adopted people is 100% discrimination. It shows prejudice and inequality against the adopted person oftentimes leading to increased mental health issues such as anger, anxiety and depression. In some cases, there are other hurdles when obtaining a drivers license or passport, along with financial burdens for attorney fees, court fees, travel expenses, and lost wages when attempting to obtain a copy of their very own VITAL RECORD!

Thank you for showing the approximately 600,000 adopted Texans, many your very own constituents your support!

Angela Willson
Self/retired teacher
Lone Oak, TX

I believe adoptees should be able to have access to open records especially to know medical history of biological parents. My step son was adopted and found his dad four years ago. It has been such an awesome thing for them to come together. I want others to have this opportunity. There are dad's out there who don't even know they have children, just as my husband didn't know about this son. I'm so thankful they had the opportunity to meet and get to know each other before my husband passed away.

Noel Johnson
Self
Austin, TX

This bill is crucial to all adult adoptees in Texas. There is no more basic human right than to know who you are and where you came from.

Jennifer Rohrer
Self
Magnolia, TX

Every person deserves the right to such personal records. If a person has a right to anything, it's one's own record of birth. I support this bill to honor of a very special adoptee, LF.

Pam Smith
Self, Retired
Hewitt, TX

All people should already have access to their original birth certificates, especially adopted people. Thank you!

Marci Purcell
Adoption Knowledge Affiliates
Austin, TX

I support HB 2006. I am requesting this committee pass this bill favorably, unanimously, and without delay so that the Texas House may once again demonstrate the incredible level of support the people of Texas have for this legislation. The many hundreds of thousands of adoptees impacted by the inability to access their original birth certificates deserve a more equitable and much less burdensome process than currently exists to access their first medical record. No other class of people is prevented from accessing their original birth certificate in the way adult adoptees are denied this right. Continuing to bar adoptees from this vital record perpetuates the shame and stigma of the past eras and does nothing to enhance anyone's privacy in this modern world.

This legislative body has reviewed countless testimonies, data sets, and documents over many decades. Public opinion polls have revealed that the majority of Texans support adult adoptees having equal access to their original birth certificates for decades. The most recent poll in 2021 by Mike Baselice reports 77% of Texans support an adopted adults' right to their original birth record.

It is also well established that birth records are not sealed upon relinquishment but upon adoption, nullifying any argument that this issue is about birth parent privacy. In fact, those aging out of foster care retain and receive their original family information, including their original birth certificate. Even though I was relinquished at birth I was not adopted until the age of three and therefore knew my original name since I had it those first three years. It was the adoption at three years of age that made it secret, not the relinquishment at birth. Also, my original vital record was my only record of birth until I was adopted.

Denying adoptees their records has nothing to do with privacy of birth parents, and only functions to provide barriers to adoptees, both logistically and emotionally. I was aware from childhood that I lost equal access to my vital record after my adoption and this government act has impacted me ever since I found out. For as long as the state keeps our vital records hidden from us the shame of adoption continues, and adoptees, ironically those who had no choice in the matter, are the ones to bear it. Let's end this now. Please pass HB 2006 favorably out of committee expeditiously. Thank you.

Anna Purcell
Self - Archaeologist
Austin, TX

To the Public Health Committee:

I am writing to convey my **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB 2006. I don't have much to say that, I'm sure, has not already been said, session and session again. Listen to adoptees who tell about the impact Original Birth Certificates have on the individual and on the community. Listen to professionals who say that this bill passing would help with physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, and spiritual wellbeing. Listen to the words of human rights organizations all over the globe who say that knowing your identity and heritage is a fundamental human right.

Thank you for listening.

Alicia Jeffrey
self administrative assistant
Waco, TX

VITAL RECORDS ARE VITAL!. Every adult adoptee in the state of Texas deserves access to a **VITAL RECORD** that is personal to them. A record that proves identity, existence, a map to medical, genetic, and ethnic history. Throughout history Texans have faced many forms of discrimination and not having the same access as non-adopted people is 100% discrimination. It shows prejudice and inequality against the adopted person oftentimes leading to increased mental health issues such as anger, anxiety and depression. In some cases, there are other hurdles when obtaining a drivers license or passport, along with financial burdens for attorney fees, court fees, travel expenses, and lost wages when attempting to obtain a copy of their very own **VITAL Records!**

Ann Hudspeth
Self
Austin, TX

It is time that Texas catch up with technology and allow adult adoptees access to their original birth certificates. I am a 53 year old adoptee and reunited with my birth parents at the age of 25, only because my family was able to pay the Edna Gladney Adoption Center in Fort Worth to reunite us. Knowing my birth families has vastly improved my life, especially my mental health.

Nowadays, adoptees get reunited via genetic testing, yet they still can't access their birth certificates unless they succeed at guessing what's on their birth certificate! I tried to get mine several years ago and failed. I know my birth parents' names (DNA confirmed) but apparently, I didn't know exactly what was on my mysterious original birth certificate and they denied my request.

Just this past November, I tried renewing my passport so I could go to Mexico and the passport office told me my birth certificate needed the hospital I was born at and the doctor that delivered me. I asked my birthmother if she knew those details and she didn't. Then the vital records office in Austin put my application for my birth certificate in "suspension," probably because they were mystified as to what to do. I didn't get my passport and had to cancel my trip to Mexico.

I'm a fairly old adult, and for someone in a government office to have access to my original birth certificate but I don't have access to it - it just doesn't make sense. No more 20 Questions. Adult adoptees have a right to their own information.

Please pass HB 2006.

Thank you for your consideration.
Ann Hudspeth

Elizabeth Jurenovich
Abrazo Adoption Associates
San Antonio, TX

I support HB 2006 because all adults in Texas should have the same civil right to the original documentation of their own birth. Adults who were adopted as children had no say in whether or not they wished to be adopted, but they should at least have the same right as all other adults in Texas to obtain the actual documentation verifying their own births, as that is essential to verifying their own ethnic identity and obtaining needed family medical history.

Linda Loranger
None
Conroe, TX

Please pass adoptive person rights to their birth certificate.

Jan Koenig
Self
Houston, TX

I strongly support passage of this bill. Adopted persons have an inherent right to know their biological parentage. Numerous other states have adopted similar legislation without any negative repercussions.

Karen Kolohe
Self; stenographer; musician
Cedar Park, TX

I am a domestic adoptee, and I am in support of HB 2006. Pass this bill. Vital records are vital, and access to our records is a human right. Thank you.

Marla Smith
Support Texas Adoptee Rights
Elgin, TX

Many people have written in support of this bill raising many salient points, personal, medical and legal.

I would like to speak to a more general topic: The right to decide, to choose, as an adult, to access my own history, medical and familial. Choice is the center of our civil rights, our democratic process and represents the respect we, as citizens, deserve and expect within our society.

It is my right and the right of all adult adoptees to choose whether or not we access our own medical or family history. The current system requires that adult adoptees navigate an arbitrary and arduous process to request and access sometimes inconsistent, inaccurate and incomplete information. This is not true for non-adopted Texans.

This arduous process reinforces the idea that our past should be hidden, that we should be ashamed or embarrassed of our history, that we are second class citizens, and, most damaging, denies our civil right to access our own information.

While my own personal story is important to me and my family I am speaking in support of the right to choose for all adult adoptees. Whether the choice is yes or no is not ultimately important. It is that we, as adults, are able to make our own choice with confidence, dignity, and respect for ourselves and everyone involved. I support adult adoptee access to their Original Birth Certificate not because it gives adult adoptees additional rights. I support adult adoptee access to their Original Birth Certificate because it restores the rights that we, as adoptees, have been denied.

Currently, in Texas, as a 53-year-old woman, I do not have the right to decide whether or not to access a basic document, my Original Birth Certificate. It is discriminatory and a denial of my civil rights a citizen. Restoring adult adoptee access to their Original Birth Certificate would restore the rights of all adult adoptees giving them the ability to make their own choices with respect and dignity to all people involved.

Thank you,

Marla Smith

Colleen Wilkinson
None
FRIENDSWOOD, TX

Adopted persons should have full access to their birth records at 18. They deserve access to this important medical record for both mental health and physical health purposes. As an adoptive parent to three children who were a part of the foster care system, this is an important part of their history that should belong to them explicitly. Thank you for supporting this important access.

Cynthia Bohnenblust
self/retired weaver
Eules, TX

I support HB 2006. I am a biological mother and the choice to place my child up for adoption was indescribably difficult. I did so to give her an opportunities and possibilities that I could not offer at the time. I had no intention of limiting her rights to her personal history and heritage. Nor did I have any expectation of privacy, in fact I was hopeful I would one day know she was healthy and happy. It was my decision to place her into adoption and I support all adopted Texan's rights to decide whether they want or need to access their original birth certificate for medical or personal reasons.

Thank you,

Cynthia Bohnenblust

Dawn Marie Scott, ADOPTIVE PARENT

Adoption Knowledge Affiliates

Austin, TX

As an adoptive parent I strongly support the right of my daughter and all persons who were adopted as minors to access their own vital records without discriminatory limitations , starting with the ORIGINAL birth certificate. All adults should be treated equally under Texas law and provided the same mechanism to manage their health and identity data. Openness in adoption is the standard of care recognized by all stakeholders, and transparency for adoptees is crucial as direct access best protects their privacy and that of the parent(s) named on their record from accidental disclosures common when searches occur via commercial dna.

As a matter of equality, I ask that the committee please pass this bill to honor adopted people and restore a basic right of autonomy that has been too long denied Texas born adoptees. Thank you.

Dawn Marie Scott,
Adoptive mom

AmiLynn Wilkinson

Self

Friendswood, TX

Vote yes please. I have 3 daughters, all adopted, and all 3 entitled to their story of origin and familial connections. Adoption is loss; access to records helps mitigate some of that loss.

Molly Anguish

Self, chef

Lubbock, TX

As an adult adoptee, please pass this bill to give access to other adopted adults! These are our personal records and we should have access to them.

Emma Horn

Self

Waco, TX

Your support of this bill would be greatly appreciated!

Rayann Vega

Self

Axtell, TX

Vital statistics are VITAL! I support this Bill!

Meagan Harris

Self

Austin, TX

Please allow adopted persons access to their original birth certificate. Whether or not an adopted person uses the information found there, it is vital information for the mental health and well being of the adopted persons. Their birth name, as well as the names of their mom and dad should not be erased entirely with no means for a person to ever know who they are. The well being of the adopted person should take top priority over anyone else in the adoption triad. They didn't ask for this life trauma, and we should support their needs and rights to their own personal information and identity in any way we can. Thank you for your consideration. Your passing this bill will directly impact the life of my own son!

Nolen Harris

Self

Austin, TX

From our eldest son (7): I think it's important to have access to it because my brother should be able to see his family if he wants to when he gets older. Thank you for your help.

Tracey Morris

Self

Spring, TX

This is a wonderful idea!!

Pamela Crawford

Self

Corsicana, TX

I am an adult that was adopted in infancy in Texas. I support this bill so that adoptees have access to their original birth certificates like all other Texans. This is significant for obtaining medical history for which all Texans should have access.

Diane Graham

Self

Goldthwaite, TX

This is a huge priority for Adoptees.

Krista Ashby

Self

DRIPPING SPRINGS, TX

Birth records allow the adopted person to know their health risks and understand them. A right everyone should have

Cheryl Morris

Self. Retired nurse

San Antonio, TX

I am in support

Connie Gray

Self

Driftwood, TX

It is discrimination to not allow adult adoptees access to their original birth certificates like every other Texas born individual.

Sarah McDonald

N/A

Dallas, TX

I am an adoptive parent, and I support adoptees' basic human right of having access to their medical records and identity. This is so crucial to their mental and physical health.

Lisa Reeves
Self/ Day care owner
Lindale, TX

As an adoptive parent, I believe my child (now an adult) should have unrestricted access to his original birth certificate. Please pass this bill!

R L Brown
Any genealogical society
Grand Prairie, TX

Please pass this bill, time to allow access to all those seeking their true identity!

Ashley Kokemoor
Self
Conroe, TX
I support HB 2006

Karen Salvo
Seld
Paige, TX

I support this bill, it's a Texan's God given right!

Jamie Wilder
Self
Huntsville, TX
I support HB2006!

Grace Covington
Texas Adoptee Rights
Houston, TX

I support this bill.

Theresa Welch
TxCare
Kilgore, TX

As an adult adoptee I deserve my original birth certificate. A human right I have been denied for 65 years

Mary Nichols, Ms.
self, retired teacher
Austin, TX

The passage of this bill will serve everyone involved, the person who was adopted, the adoptive parents, and the birth parents.

Olga Perez Soriano
Self
Austin, TX

I support adoptees right to access their own vital original birth records without discrimination.

Michelle Tullous
Self, office manager
Austin, TX

I support adult adoptees right to access their own vital records.

Brittany Cervantes
Self
Bryan, TX

As an adoptee myself, I appreciate your support!

Anne Bingham
Self
Dripping Springs, TX

I am a birth mother and I support HB 2006.

Sherry Ferguson, LVN
self
Austin, TX

I support HB 2006

Barnaby Fry
Self
Dallas, TX

Please vote for this bill, HB 2006. All adopted adults deserve access to their original information, and we're long past time to reform the law.

Paula Mele
Paula Mele Design
DALLAS, TX

Please vote yes for HB 2006. All adopted adults deserve access to their original information, and we're long past time to reform the law.

Brenda Chapel, Ms.
Myself/my child adoptive parent of a minor, educator and trauma informed counselor
Dallas, TX

I support house Bill 2006. My adopted child deserves access to his own records, just like anyone else. The practice of sealing adopted persons records is discriminatory and only supports uneducated adopted parents who damage their children by hiding their truth. We know that adopted people are 4x more likely to unalive themselves and 8x more likely to suffer from mental health issues. Their struggles with identity are at the crux of these statistics. Having access to their own records can provide an adoptee with answers to questions about who they are and as a result decrease the identity struggles and the horrifying statistics I just mentioned.

The practice of sealing records started with Georgia Tann and her stealing and selling children. We need adoption reform, this is the first baby step towards it. Please vote for House bill 2006 and provide my child and all other adopted persons with access to records that are rightfully theirs.

Koren Whited
Self/Program Manager
Pflugerville, TX

I support HB2006

Christina Bedos
self
Austin, TX

These records need to be able to be released. I am a daughter of 3, my mother was adopted and as daughters we are already having medical issues without knowledge of background. It's imperative for life and health at this point.

Amy Greenwald
Self
Austin, TX

Let the adoptees have rights.

David Teece
self, freelance legal writer
Dallas, TX

I ask all fair-minded members of the committee to please vote yes for HB 2006. All adopted adults deserve access to their original birth certificates and other personal information. As the uncle of an adoptee who has struggled with this issue all of her adult life, I understand we are long past time to reform the law. Thank you.

JENNIFER SPROAT
Self
Austin, TX

I support or I am in FAVOR of passage of HB2006 Harris.
Please help Restore equal access to adoptees to their own vital records .

Jennifer Jablonski
Self
Jonestown, TX

In favor

Sandra Audilet Ashdown
Texas adoptee support
Willis, TX

I support HB 2006

Melanie Chung-Sherman
Melanie Chung-Sherman, LCSW, PLLC.
PLANO, TX

Please vote yes for HB 2006. All adopted adults deserve access to their original information, and we're long past the time to reform the law. With the extensive advent of DNA registries, redacted adoptee records are all but obsolete. Allowing adoptees and the next generation full access to original birth certificate information makes sense. As an adopted person and licensed mental health provider specializing in adoptee mental health, transparency and equitable access are beneficial and conducive to positive mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression reduction. --Melanie Chung-Sherman

Heather Ludden

Self

Austin, TX

I AM BIRTH PARENT IN FAVOR OF HB 2006

Karyn Spetz

Self

Plano, TX

Please vote yes to give adoptees information their full adoption history information.

Lindsey Hurvitz

Self

Austin, TX

I am an adoptee and I would like to have my background medical records available to me, for my health. I have no records and I am always asked this question in the Dr's office. I also cannot know what diseases to take precautionary measures for that may be genetic and if caught early could be prevented or cared for.

Patricia Martinez Dorner

Self

San Antonio, TX

As an adoptive parent and adoption focused professional, I strongly support this bill and advocate for its passage.

Diana Wilkinson

Self, project manager

Hutto, TX

Support this completely!

Amy Gregorcyk
Support Texas adoptee rights
Montgomery, TX

I am writing in support of HB2006. I am a Texas-born adoptee. In July 1973, I was born prematurely at Duncan Memorial Hospital, at the Edna Gladney adoption agency. My Biological Mom made the most selfless decision and gave me up for someone else to raise as she could not. The reasons for me to know about my medical history intensified when I became pregnant with my daughter in the Fall of 1995. My pregnancy was far from textbook. In April that next Spring, I went into premature labor with my daughter. By the grace of God, we had her 33 days here on this earth. We had zero information to go on with my medical history. Being my daughter's father was adopted too, we had a double whammy. Doctors would just look at us and ask again if we knew our medical history. The answer was no. We had none.

In fact think about when you go to the doctor for a medical issue. What is one of the first things they want to know? Your medical history. I have to write adopted across the page and leave it completely blank. So when something is wrong medically, I either have to go all out and spend tons of money trying to figure the issue, or just try to treat one symptom at a time. Many times it doesn't work, meaning more doctor trips, and more expenses. Several years ago, after all the heartache I had been through, I called Edna Gladney Home and paid the fee to get my "records." It's obvious that they whited-out and deleted much information. Reading through my medical baby records, it was so eerily similar to my daughter's. I learned so much information from these documents that they had never told my parents about. I learned that I was resuscitated several times. I also learned I was in Foster Care/Ward of the State for close to 2 months and my crib name was Julie. One of the biggest revelations was that my Bio-Mother had a tumor removed from her stomach at the age of 10. A tumor being removed is information that I SHOULD BE HAVE BEEN INFORMED ABOUT. My parents were never informed about any of this information. Fast forward-. I have buried a daughter and have lost 3 other babies. At this point I cannot have children. I really want to live a long, happy life with my husband. Having the medical information of my bio-parents could definitely help me live a longer life. I am so glad that recently, through the use of commercial DNA testing, I have obtained my family medical history and reunited with biological family, and made more important discoveries about what conditions run in my family, even if it was too late to save my daughter. If I had waited for the state to give me my own medical history information, I would be still waiting. Years later, come to find out, I have a genetic condition that doesn't make pregnancy easy. I should have been told that information and given my OBC

Cecily Pretty
Self, Special Projects Manager (municipal)
San Antonio, TX

I am writing in support of this bill. Allowing adoptees access to their own records is imperative and provides better outcomes for them and their families.

Taja Towne
Self
Fort Worth, TX

Vote yes for HB 2006. Adoptees deserve to have access to their records. To deny them access is to deem them as less than non-adoptees. This is their lives and their family history. They deserve that information. As a licensed clinical social worker, I have seen first hand the negative impact on adoptees of not being able to access their records.

Lauranda Garza, Counselor
Abrazo Adoption Associates
San Antonio, TX

In support of allowing adoptees to have access to their original birth certificate.

Leeann Burton
Self
San Antonio, TX

I was adopted and I strongly believe this should be a right to the adopted to retrieve their original birth certificate

Amy Byrd, Family Services Coordinator
Abrazo Adoption Associates
San Antonio, TX

Adoptees should know their story.

Jan Faulk-Eggleston, Dr
Self
San Antonio, TX

Please listen, this finally needs to pass. Adopted children are human beings also, and do grow up to vote

Judith Burns
Self
Buda, TX

I support this bill. Adoptees should be granted the civil right, the human right to their birth information. Who else in our society is denied this right? As a social worker, I worked in adoptions for many years. Adoptees often struggle with identity issues due to these discriminatory policies. It is past time to correct them.

Brittany Eggleston
Self
San Antonio, TX
None

Jeff Harris
Self
Austin, TX

All children deserve free and unfettered access to their own records. The ability to fully understand where one comes from and the ability to act on that knowledge without state interference is a fundamental right. Please act accordingly with this bill.

Mary Haley
Self - retired
220 Lundblade Ln, TX

Support.

Jill Beckwith
Self
San Antonio, TX

Every adult adoptee in Texas deserves access to this vital record that is personal to them. A record that proves identity, existence, a map to medical, genetic, and ethnic history. Throughout history Texans have faced many forms of discrimination and not having the same access as non-adopted people is another form of discrimination. It shows prejudice and inequality against the adopted person, oftentimes leading to increased mental health issues such as anger, anxiety, and depression. In some cases, there are other hurdles when obtaining a drivers license or passport, along with financial burdens for attorney fees, court fees, travel expenses, and lost wages when attempting to obtain a copy of their very own VITAL RECORD. Thank you for showing the approximately 600,000 adopted Texans, many your very own constituents your support!

Deana Perkins

Self

Sachse, TX

I am a mother of an adopted daughter.

All adult adoptees deserve access to their original birth information. This is long past due.

Please vote YES for this bill.

Laurie Griffin

Self

Denton, TX

Please pass this bill! Adopted people deserve to know their personal background information. This right has been denied for far too long.

Jana Gross

self

Austin, TX

I support HB 2006

Lydia Reynolds

Self

Mckinney, TX

I am in support of allowing adopted individuals to have access to birth records at the age of 18.

Lisa Johnston

myself

STEPHENEVILLE, TX

As a birthmother to 2 children that I placed & 2 children that I parented, I urge you to PASS HB 2006. We are in reunion with both my adult adoptees. there are several reasons why:

1. The daughter I placed struggled to get her passport because of her amended birth certificate.
2. I was told that my adult adoptees that I birthed & I need to be "protected from" each other because of potential upheaval in their lives. This is FALSE! The child I placed who is now an adult should be allowed to choose if they want their original information, first medical & legal records that include all birth parent identities. As the birthmother, I would NEVER need to be protected from my own flesh & blood.
3. BECAUSE THAT BABY WHO IS PLACED CAN/COULD NOT CONSENT TO THE ADOPTION AGREEMENTS FOR SEALED RECORDS OR PRIVACY!
4. As a level of decency & privacy the open access to their original birth certificate would make that potential first contact much more private than random DNA connections that many times alert the entire family before the birthparent.
5. For anyone saying that I was promised my privacy when I placed, I was not & did not need to be!
6. It is proven that adoptees of all ages are better off psychologically when they have access to their birth family, so why would we stop grown adults from gaining a better mental health status in this world full of struggling people?
7. Why would we continue the UNEVEN access that we have now where some counties require many more hoops/levels of fees & other counties simply require a form be filed asking for access? The Texas-born adult adoptees deserve an even level of access!
8. There is also the issue that the USA is full of states that have passed this type of legislation, so Texas is NOT leading our nation in a basic human right for equal access for adults born in Texas. That is both sad & wrong.
9. It is a basic human right to have access to your legal identity, why are we denying ADULTS this access?

As you can see above, no real reason to NOT pass this bill exists, if you have a question about any of these, or would like to hear my thoughts on your concerns, I am happy to take time for you. You may call me at 214-563-8288 day or night (Yes, 24 hour access for you because that is how important this bill is!) Thank you for your service to our great state of Texas, I pray you pass this bill without hesitation or delay.

Arin Reid

Self

Austin, TX

I am in support of adult adoptees' rights to access their own vital records. Please pass HB 2006 Harris, Cody.

Charissa Jordan

STAR (Support Texas Adoptee Rights)

San Antonio, TX

The mistrusted word “adoption” is historically rooted in severing connections and erasing identities. Thanks to years of diligent studies recording the impacts of closed adoptions, we now offer families the closure that was once withheld from so many children suffering lost identities. But what of the ones left behind still struggling with this identity crisis?

I was adopted in August 1981 in a closed adoption process. I knew nothing about my maternal background, ethnicity, or reasons behind my birth. At 35 years old I did ancestry DNA to piece together the missing parts. Through DNA I found I am half First Nations Mi'kmaq from Canada and half Slavic. I began to reach out to DNA matches on my indigenous side but hit a brick wall. Three DNA experts worked my case, all hitting a brick wall. Here is why.

The Indian Act of 1876, the 60s scoop, and the Millennium scoop targeted Indigenous communities to extinguish Aboriginality. Canadian Native mothers went to hospitals to have their babies just to watch the baby leave the room alive and never come back. They were told their baby died and they were not allowed to see their baby when all along the baby was alive and sold for adoption or put in a residential school...in other words, cultural genocide.

When a closed adoption took place, society was saying to that child that their origins are so insignificant that it is easily erased, and they are expected to be thankful for their circumstance by the whole of society. This action leaves a significant hollowness that cannot be translated into mere words. I am very grateful for my circumstance and also hurt, it is an internal conflict fraught with guilt that is never satisfied.

The deeper I dug into my presumed past, the worse it got. A DNA cousin match of mine said they had a cousin who grew up always thinking her baby sister was stolen in the Millennium scoop. In June 1981 her mother gave birth to a girl that was taken from her alive and never brought back. She remembers a little white casket that no one was allowed to open coming to the house and burying it before her mother even got home from the hospital. Her mother died always believing her daughter was stolen. Researcher Dr. Pauline Goss calls this “ambiguous grief;” where you grieve someone who is still alive. Only this heartache interconnects with silent grief; the pain of loss that is not acknowledged or is stigmatized. Pain like this does not acknowledge countries or state boundaries, it transcends all man-made laws and supposed good intentions.

We each have a unique story to tell on what it means to experience severed adoption. The bottom line of my story is this, my mother is out there, unaware of her native family. I should not have to fight so hard to piece back together what was torn apart by governments and trusted authorities. It should be the government fighting hard to put right what did harm for so long.

Robert Boyd

Self Retired

Texarkana, TX

Please pass HB 2006 by Cody Harris.

Susan Burek

Self: I am a Parent and a parent advocate for people with disabilities

Austin, TX

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB 2006, related to the birth records of adopted persons.

Section (g) of this bill allows adopted persons who are 18 or older (or certain relatives if they are deceased) to submit a written request for a non-certified copy of their original birth certificate if the adopted person was born in Texas and a supplementary birth certificate was issued after their adoption.

Getting access to a non-certified copy of the original birth certificate is very important to the adoptive person because it gives them essential information that will be significant for the rest of their life, especially medical information that would assist them in obtaining medical services and treatment for conditions that are hard to diagnose without knowledge about their biological family's medical history.

I am the adoptive parent of an adult child who has searched for her birth records related to her biological parents. She lives in Austin but was not born in Texas, so this bill will not apply to her, but her experiences provide a good example of why this bill is so important. She has several disabilities that are difficult to diagnose without providing a medical history for her biological family. On all of her medical records, she has to write "UNKNOWN" for all of the very important family history questions, which prevents her doctors from understanding important clues that would help them diagnose and treat her disabilities. This has made diagnosis and treatment of her disabilities much more difficult.

She was born in India and adopted in Texas with the approval of the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), now Homeland Security. When she turned 18, she was allowed to request a copy of her international adoption documents through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and she obtained a copy of her birth and relinquishment documents, with information about her biological parents. She is now in the process of trying to contact her biological parents in India through an adoption reunion service that is specially trained in the delicate process of assisting with adoption reunions in a fair way for all parties involved in the adoption.

Getting access to this information is very important to her emotionally and medically. Every adopted child needs to understand the circumstances related to their adoption, which are often unknown when original birth certificates are sealed. If possible, it is important for them to be able to establish any possible connections to their biological family to help heal the social and emotional wounds of the adoption process related to the very real trauma of losing their connection to their biological family. Finally, it is essential for them to get key medical information about their biological parents and extended biological family to help them get the medical care and treatment that they need for the rest of their lives.

PLEASE APPROVE HB 2006.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Debbie Edson

Self

Cedar Park, TX

As an adoptee from 1956, I need to know and understand my family medical history so that appropriate medical therapy can be prescribed

Charles Lind

Support Texas Adoptee Rights

Cedar Park, TX

Please pass this Bill. I am an adopted person. My experience, personally and in long-term communication with all members of the Adoption Triad, secrecy, regarding relinquishment and adoption is never helpful for any party concerned.

Please accord us the civil right that non-adopted persons have.

Thank you for your attention to this!

David Brownhill
self , accountant
Highland Village, TX

Please support this bill. My mom is an adult adoptee this bill will benefit our entire family.

Alexis Bedos
Self
Austin, TX

My mother was adopted, and I have already battled severe body injuries and cancer. I would really like to know if this is coming from her biological parents' background. It's not okay to hold health information like this. We need to have this released. Thank you for your time.

Priya Rana, Ms.

Self: I am an adult who was adopted as a child
Austin, TX

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB 2006, related to the birth records of adopted persons.

Section (g) of this bill allows adopted persons who are 18 or older (or certain relatives if the adopted person is deceased) to submit a written request for a non-certified copy of their original birth certificate if the adopted person was born in Texas and a supplementary birth certificate was issued after their adoption.

I'm an adult adopted person. Getting access to a non-certified copy of the original birth certificate is very important for adopted persons because it gives us important information that we will need for the rest of our lives, including medical information to help us get the medical services and treatment that we need for conditions that are hard to diagnose without knowledge of our biological family's medical history.

I live in Texas, but I wasn't born here, so this bill won't apply to me, but my experiences provide an excellent example of why this bill is so important. I have several disabilities that are difficult to diagnose without providing information about my biological family. When I was a child, my adoptive mom had to write "UNKNOWN" for all of the very important family history questions that would have helped my doctors diagnose and treat my conditions. Now, as an adult, I have to do the same thing. My unknown family medical history creates significant barriers to my doctors' ability to provide the medical services that I need. All they can do is "guess", which isn't a very good way to treat medical conditions that might be easier to treat if I had access to information about my biological family's medical history.

I was born in India and my adoption was sealed, but it was approved by the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), now Homeland Security, before I could be adopted internationally. When I turned 18, I was able to request a copy of my adoption documents through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and I got a copy of my birth and relinquishment documents, which provided important information about my biological parents. I'm now trying to find them using an adoption reunion service in India with special training in assisting with adoption reunions. My adoptive parents fully support of my efforts to reunite with my biological family.

Getting access to information about my biological family is very important to me socially, emotionally, and medically. Every adopted person needs to understand why they were adopted in order to understand their complicated connection to both their biological family and their adoptive family, but this is impossible when original birth certificates are sealed. I know from personal experience that every adoption involves trauma when a child loses their connection to their biological family, and this trauma must be address and healed. And we will need access to our biological family's medical information for the rest of our lives.

PLEASE APPROVE HB 2006.

Thank you very much.

Melissa Chan
Self - educator
Austin, TX

I support this Bill. Adoptees should have access to their original birth records.

Kristy Denison
NA
San Antonio, TX

I support bill HB2006

Joi Antoinette
Self
Round rock, TX

No fee

Anju Jaggi
Self
Austin, TX

I am in favor.

Ximena Huerta
Self/Abrazo
Hollywood Park, TX

None

Shannon Doyle
National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter
Austin, TX

HB 2006 would restore access to original birth certificates (OBCs) for adopted persons 18 years and older, so it is readily available to them. For non-adoptees, obtaining original birth certificates is always available upon request, while adopted persons do not have such access and have to petition a court in order to obtain it. NASW-TX supports HB 2006 so that adult adoptees in Texas no longer have to petition to get their OBC and have equal access to their legal documents. Access to OBCs should be the right of all adults to request if and when they need to, and adult adoptees should be no exception.

Michelle Schaefer
Self
Nacogdoches, TX

I am a birth mother and my biological daughter tracked me down through Ancestry DNA. If the concern over original birth certificates is privacy, then I would say that access to the original birth certificate would actually provide MORE privacy. If an adoptee has access to the OBC, they can contact the birth parent directly, instead of working through a family tree. And contacting members of a family who may not know the mother ever had a baby. At this point, so many people have entered DNA on sites like Ancestry, that an adoptee is likely to be able to find someone in their original family, even relatives the birth mother hasn't seen in years, or ever. Providing access to the OBC might actually provide more privacy and control for birth mothers, so I support this measure.

Paul Mitchell
Self - Game Designer
Austin, TX

I am very much in support of this measure, and urge the Committee to vote in favor.

Sylvia Crixell
Self
Austin, TX

Please vote yes. This is a critical issue. It is cruel to disallow. Thank you!

Jackie Gibbs
Self
Houston, TX

I support HB 2006.

Kathryn Nichols
Self
Manchaca, TX

Please vote yes on this important bill.

Shannon Quist
Self, Technical Writer
Denton, TX

I am asking as a Texan adoptee that you support this bill. I was born in San Antonio, TX in 1991 and adopted with a semi-open adoption. My biological family and my adoptive family didn't know each other's last names so all communication had to go through the agency. That kind of situation makes it difficult to apply for an original birth certificate copy under the current laws. The secrecy in our current laws also made it easier for my adoptive parents to justify keeping information about me secret which has strained our relationships. And while the internet and DNA searches have helped me find my biological family as an adult, I wish I would have had the option to quietly mail in a check and receive my paperwork myself rather than conduct a public search. That's what this bill will allow future adult adoptees to do. All Texan adults deserve to have the option available to them to know their personal histories, but right now adult adoptees do not. Please support this bill so that we can give dignity to all Texan adoptees.

Bethany Johnson
Self, Professor
Austin, TX

I am writing in support of HB 2006. This is an important (crucial) life-changing right for adoptees. Thank you.