



Adoption Birth Records: HB 61 & SB 23  
Catholic Conference of Ohio  
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The Catholic Church in Ohio has a long-standing history of facilitating adoptions and accepting permanent surrenders.

In examining HB 61 & SB 23 with each of our diocesan adoption directors, the Catholic Conference of Ohio concludes that the proposed provision of a contact preference form is a helpful compromise regarding the access to an adoptee's birth records. We add our support for HB 61 and SB 23.

We acknowledge and affirm that providing adopted adults access to their original birth certificate is not only good practice, but also, more importantly, the right and just thing to do. Legislation allowing such access, while establishing a way for birth parents to state their contact preference (which could include "no contact"), has been shown to work in other states. Similar provisions in HB 61 and SB 23 seek to balance the privacy concerns of birth parents and the identity rights of adoptees.

In the past, our Conference's struggle was over ways to balance the competing interests of both the birthparent and the adopted person. Between 1964 and 1996 our programs did indeed follow state law and inform birthparents that their anonymity would be protected, and the original birth certificate of their child would be sealed. In 1995 the State enacted, what at the time, was hoped to be a reasonable and workable compromise that affirmed the current mutual registry and created the "open unless closed" prospective provisions. It has now become apparent that the mutual registry has not worked well. In addition, societal attitudes and adoption search options have changed with the times. Persons are being found. The contact preference provisions will provide an option for both the birthparent and the adoptee who prefer not to be contacted should they be found.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio is pleased to support HB 61.