

Dear Chairman Jones and members of the Medicaid, Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear my voice which supports restoring Ohio adoptee rights. I have flown in from Texas as this Bill is very important and personal to me. I am an Ohio adoptee, born in 1972 in Columbus Ohio, Franklin County.

The week of my 18th birthday, 1990, a friend drove me to the Columbus Probate Court from a suburb of Cleveland. For years I had imagined the day when I would turn 18 and finally be able to request my Original Birth Certificate. I approached the Clerk and was greeted with a laugh when I asked her for my Birth Certificate. I had no idea that it would not be rightfully mine. I was shocked to find out that I might never be able to have it. I felt wounded, confused and bewildered as we made the drive back home to the Cleveland area.

It was soon after this that I moved to Texas. It took me ten years to understand the next steps that were to be taken. Early in 2000 I petitioned the Probate Court of Franklin County for a release of non-identifying information.

In April I received my non identifying information as well as a letter informing me that I could also petition the Court for the release of information regarding my name at birth and the identity of my biological parents.

At this time I also sent a letter to then Governor Mr. Bob Taft. My letter to him was asking why I was not allowed to see my adoption records or Original Birth Certificate. He did reply.

In October of 2000 I received my Order from the Probate Court of Franklin County. This is what I would like to touch on.

The Order states in part, and I quote: "Further , this Court finds that neither the agency nor our records reveal that either birth parent is deceased."  
And while it took me a year and a half to notice ".....does contain a release of identity information filed by biological sibling of petitioner." I called as soon as I did notice this line. I spoke to the clerk at the Probate Court who informed me that this line must have been a mistake as there was no petition filed in my chart.

In June of 2002 I received an Amended Order of the above mentioned Order. I opened it and this time my name was incorrect. Once again I made a phone call to the Probate Court and the clerk told me that she must have had the name typed in my document on her mind and therefore caused a "typo". I was again sent an Amended Order.

In each of the three Orders the same line appears: "Further, this Court finds that neither the agency nor our records reveal that either birth parent is deceased."

In July of 2004 I finally found someone who was able to grace me with kindness and the skills needed to find out who my birth mother was.

July 15th 2004 I received the phone call I had waited over 14 years for. My birth mother's name was Dottye Moore. My half-sister's name is Karen.

Dottye Moore died in a car accident in Columbus Ohio in July 1973. She was 24 years old when she died alone on Stelzer and Morse Road. She left behind a husband and my sister Karen who was not yet 6 years old.

Dottye Moore's death was not only on the local news but also reported on in the Columbus Dispatch.

For my 14 years of legal age searching my birth mother, Dottye Moore, was dead.

"Further, this Court finds that neither the agency nor our records reveal that either birth parent is deceased."

My search for truth turned to other areas of my adoption dealing with Dottye and the life she had. I wanted to find out as much about her as I possibly could and that took time.

I continued to be confused by the single sentence in my orders and in the summer of 2011 once again asked the Court for the name of the mentioned "Agency". I was replied to via letter form from the Deputy Clerk of the Adoption Department. And I quote: "The information you have requested is not available. Under law the agency and biological father's name (if either applies) is not considered "open", even with the filing of the birth mother's death certificate, as in your case."

I cannot help but to wonder if I had the access to my Original Birth Certificate like my fellow adoptees born before 1964 have, what might have changed.

I cannot help but to feel that my now 22 year search for truth and equality has led me down a lengthy trail of deception, misinformation and secrets all supported and controlled by the state of Ohio's current three tiered law.

I can however hope that the time for change and equality will present itself now offering equality for all Ohio adoptees.

Sincerely,  
Wendy Barkett  
Ohio Adoptee 1972

682-831-9663  
[swbarkett@att.net](mailto:swbarkett@att.net)  
7500 Bolo Lane  
Flower Mound, TX 75022