

Law Office of Faith Getz Rousso

591 Stewart Avenue - Ste 400 • Garden City, NY 11530
Office (516) 500-9292 • Fax (516) 299-9314
faith@RAadopt.com

February 15, 2019

The Honorable Velmanette Montgomery
The Honorable David I. Weprin
New York State Senate
New York Assembly
915 Legislative Office Building
526 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assembly Member Weprin and Senator Montgomery:

I am an adult adoptee, an adoption attorney with an office in Garden City, NY and on the executive board for the Nassau County Woman's Bar Association for the past five (5) years.

As an adult adoptee, adopted 52 years ago in an agency adoption, I feel strongly that an adoptee has a constitutional right to have access to their original birth certificate. It is inherently unfair to treat the class of individuals placed for adoption, differently than the rest of the citizens of the United States. To deny this class of individuals from knowing the truth about whom they are – is for lack of better words, *wrong*. Why should adoptees live their life in the dark about which they are, have their original birth certificate replaced by an amended birth certificate?

As an attorney that concentrates on private adoptions in NY, who has finalized hundreds of adoptions over the past 10 years; I am conflicted each day as I guide adoptive families through the process to form their families by adoption. The families I work with, adopt children that have been VOLUNTARILY placed for adoption with hopeful adoptive families. The majority of adoptions are open, and the families exchange identifying information. It is unconscionable that I am part of the process that seals the biological family names and substitute it with the adoptive family name.

And, as a member of the executive board of the Nassau County Woman's Bar Association; I respectfully *disagree* with NY Woman's Bar Association position that the biological parent's were promised anonymity when they placed their child for adoption. Research supports the position that biological parents who "voluntarily" placed their children years ago, welcome the opportunity to be found and offer assurance that their children are "OK". It is my understanding, initially the rationale for the sealing of the records was protection for adoptive parents (to prevent biological parents from coming back ... NOT to protect the biological parents)

As a result of the foregoing, I strongly support A5494/S3419, the adoptee rights bills that you are each sponsoring and for which you are providing ongoing leadership.

I support A5494/S3419 in the New York Assembly and Senate. Please feel free to share this letter with your colleagues. I encourage them to follow your leadership and to move these bills forward to Governor Andrew Cuomo for signature and final enactment.

Thank you for your kind attention to this issue,

Regards,

Faith Getz Rousso