



... because every child needs a permanent, loving, and culturally sensitive family

February 11, 2019

New York State Senator Velmanette Montgomery
188 State Street
915 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Senator Montgomery:

I'm writing to express the support of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) for New York S3419. NACAC supports legislation that will enable adoptees to gain unrestricted access to original birth certificates.

Founded in 1974 by adoptive parents, NACAC is committed to meeting the needs of waiting children and adoptive families. NACAC supports adoptive parents, prospective adopters, young people who were in foster care or adopted, and child welfare professionals in an effort to ensure permanency for children.

NACAC has long supported the right of adoptees to have access to their original birth certificates. As our position statement below reflects, NACAC continues to believe that adoptees are well served by having access to information about their birth families, and are entitled to that information.

Philosophy

NACAC believes that every adopted person has the right, at the age of majority or legal emancipation, to receive personal information about his or her birth, foster, and adoption history, including medical information, and educational and social history. NACAC supports efforts of adoptees to have access to information about and connections with their birth and foster families. NACAC also supports adoptees' efforts to find birth family connections through the use of DNA registries.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

NACAC believes it is the responsibility of states, provinces, and all child-placing agencies to create, support, and adequately fund adoption disclosure registries that actively seek birth relatives or adoptees, upon registration of any of these parties. If such active registries are not available, NACAC supports voluntary mutual consent registries for adults as one way for adoptees to access information.

Recognizing that many adult adoptees have a need for more complete information about their birth families, NACAC supports their right to this information and supports access to original birth certificates to any adult adoptee at age of majority.

Upon a showing of good cause, courts should have the authority to require disclosure of adoption information and birth records to adoptees, birth family members, and adoptive family members. States, provinces, and agencies must preserve birth and adoption records safely and accessibly for future retrieval.

In the last 40 years, adoption has changed dramatically. Almost all adoptions have some form of openness as we have learned about how important their history and background is to children who have lost their first families. Adoptive families now demand access to background information concerning their adopted children. They recognize the importance their adopted children place on knowing about their past and know that this information can be critical to helping children thrive.

We thank you for introducing S3419 and encourage its passage so adoptees can have access to important information about their birth families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Boo". The letters are cursive and fluid, with the "M" and "B" being particularly prominent.

Mary Boo
Executive Director