



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

February 4, 2021

Texas State Representative Cody Harris
Texas State Capitol, Room E1.318
PO Box 2910
Austin TX 79768

Dear Representative Harris:

I'm writing to express the support of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) for House Bill 1386, the Bill of Adoptee Rights in Texas. NACAC supports legislation that will restore unrestricted access to original birth certificates for all adult adoptees and will establish access for the descendants and other relatives in cases where the adopted person has died.

Founded in 1974 by adoptive parents, NACAC is committed to meeting the needs of waiting children and adoptive families and other members of the adoption constellation. 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. We serve individuals and organizations all around the US and Canada, including in Texas.

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 as a basic human and civil right.

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 few decades, 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 and adoptees recognize the importance of adoptees' knowing about their past and know that this information can be critical to helping individuals thrive.

We encourage you to support passage of HB 1386 so adoptees can have this fundamental human right—access to important information about themselves.

Sincerely,

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

Mary Boo
Executive Director