



SB 2188

Measure Title: RELATING TO ADOPTION RECORDS.

Report Title: Adoption Records; Open Access

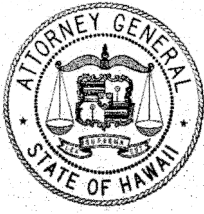
Description: Grants adopted individuals who have attained eighteen years of age, unfettered access to the adopted individual's sealed adoption records.

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: HMS, JDL

Introducer(s): GABBARD, BAKER, CHUN OAKLAND, GREEN, NISHIHARA, L. Thielen



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE, 2014**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 2188, RELATING TO ADOPTION RECORDS.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

DATE: Tuesday, February 4, 2014

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 016

TESTIFIER(S): David M. Louie, Attorney General, or
Jill T. Nagamine, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Chun Oakland and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General has concerns about this bill in its current form.

Section 578-15, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), provides for confidentiality of adoption proceedings and records and offers methods to unseal secret adoption records in some circumstances. This bill would amend section 578-15, HRS, to remove the confidentiality protections and allow adoptive parents, adopted individuals, and birth parents in all circumstances to access adoption records after the adopted individual reaches the age of eighteen. There is no provision to keep existing confidentiality protections in effect for those people who may have relied on them, and, as such, this bill might violate the constitutional right to privacy.

Currently, the law allows those natural parents who desire to maintain confidentiality during their lifetimes to file affidavits with the court to maintain their privacy. After the adopted individual reaches the age of eighteen, natural parents who desire privacy may file an affidavit that is effective for ten years, and then renew either for another ten years or for the parent's lifetime. The adopted individual also has the right to file an affidavit requesting confidentiality. There are slight differences between adoptions that occurred before January 1, 1991, and those that occurred after December 31, 1990. See HRS § 578-15(b)(2) and (b)(3). For the earlier adoptions, if there is a request to unseal the records, the court has an obligation to make good faith efforts to notify the parties that a request to unseal the records has been made and to offer an opportunity to file an affidavit requesting confidentiality. For those adoptions post December 31, 1990, the parties have the responsibility to remember to file a confidentiality affidavit

without any reminders from the court. Either way, current law allows parties to adoptions to request confidentiality.

We are concerned that amending section 578-15 to allow for unsealing sealed birth records that were intended to be kept confidential upon request of the adopted individual, the adoptive parents, or the natural parents may be a violation of the right to privacy under the State Constitution. Without allowing some provision to remain in the law that gives adopted individuals, adoptive parents, and natural parents who desire confidentiality that option, the bill may violate the right to informational privacy afforded by article I, section 6, of the Hawaii Constitution.

Article I, section 6, of the Hawaii Constitution provides: "The right of the people to privacy is recognized and shall not be infringed without the showing of a compelling state interest. The legislature shall take affirmative steps to implement this right." In Brende v. Hara, 113 Haw. 424, 153 P.3d 1109 (2007), the Hawaii Supreme Court upheld a petitioner's right to privacy in her medical records that had been used for litigation purposes. In applying article I, section 6, the Supreme Court stated:

As previously noted article I, section 6 provides in part that "[t]he right of the people to privacy is recognized and shall not be infringed without the showing of a compelling state interest."

[T]he [article I, section 6] right of privacy encompasses the common law right of privacy or tort privacy. This is a recognition that the dissemination of private and personal matters, be it true, embarrassing or not, can cause mental pain and distress far greater than bodily injury. For example, the right can be used to protect an individual from invasion of [the individual's] private affairs, public disclosure of embarrassing facts, and publicity placing the individual in a false light. In short, this right of privacy includes the right of an individual to tell the world to "mind your own business."

Brende, 113 Haw. at 430, 153 P.3d at 1115 (quoting 1978 Constitutional Convention standing committee report).

While it is not clear that the Hawaii Supreme Court would rule the same way regarding confidentiality of adoption information as it has relating to medical records, it is possible. To overcome the constitutional right to informational privacy, the State must be able to show a compelling state interest. Id., 153 P.2d at 1115. If there is no compelling state interest in

denying privacy to adopted individuals, adoptive parents, and natural parents who seek it, then there must be a provision in the law that allows adopted individuals, adoptive parents, and natural parents a way of maintaining confidentiality.

If there is a compelling state interest, which is not apparent from the bill, then amending the law to apply to all adoption records, including those records created before the enactment of this bill, would be still be a retroactive deprivation of a right to privacy held by those people who have already relied on the current law. This would be a violation of article I, section 5, of the Hawaii Constitution which provides: "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor be denied the equal protection of the laws, nor be denied the enjoyment of the person's civil rights or be discriminated against in the exercise thereof because of race, religion, sex or ancestry."

While it would be possible to avoid a retroactive deprivation of a right to privacy by amending the bill to apply to only those adoptions that occur after the effective date of enactment, it is not clear whether the violation of the right to informational privacy can be resolved. That issue would have to be decided by the courts.

We respectfully request this Committee to consider our comments.

To: Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair
Senator Josh Green, Vice-Chair
Members of the Human Service Committee

From: Daniel Morishige, MSW

Hearing: February 4, 2014
Room 016
1:00 p.m.

RE: **Testimony in support of SB 2188**

My name is Daniel Morishige and I am an adoptive parent of two adopted children. I am also a social worker who worked in adoptions for many years.

I am in support of SB 2188.

I support SB 2188 for the following reasons:

- The best practice in adoption is being open and honest with adoptees about their adoption. Keeping the adoption a secret is an outdated practice of the mid 20th century.
- Societal, community and family support is important in not only supporting the institution of adoption but to also to “normalize” the experience for all parties involved: the adoptee, the birth parents, the adoptive parents, the extended family, siblings and children of adoptees, etc. Support in this case involves access to information about the adoption through the court records.
- Adult adoptees are the only people who cannot access information about their adoption without some “intermediary” be it Family Court, the Department of Health, the adoption agency or the third party facilitating the adoption.
- The past 20 years of limited access to the court records with birth parents or adoptee’s approval has not shown the “mass” denial of access to court records that was feared.
- In my experience access to records are initiated by both adoptees and birth parents. The limiting of court records does hamper and prevent exchange of information by both parties and reunions due to the limitation on information of each other’s identity and the cost of hiring a court searcher.
- I believe that there should be no age restrictions regarding the access to court records. However; this is a good start with giving adoptees and birth parents access at the adoptee’s 18th birthday.

- If we wish to promote adoption as a “positive experience” then we have to support it by providing “openness and honesty” and not have it remain in “closeness and secrecy”.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my wholehearted support for this bill.

SB2188

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for HMS on Feb 4, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Naka	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii on 10/27/1951 and was given to the local orphanage in Honolulu, Hawaii. For as long as I can remember, I cannot answer who I am because I don't know who my parents are. I have had no family (blood) for 62 years and I have struggled with this. I have no background for my ethnicity, or why I might be pre-disposed to certain diseases. I have been asked since I was in grade school what my family background was and the only thing I could say is "I don't know, I was adopted." I have carried around an emptiness inside myself and wondered where my family came from, who they were, and why I am not allowed to know the answers to these questions my entire life. I have heard of many other adoptees finding their family and it tears at my heart, as I'm sure it does for all others, and I need to know. I decided to do DNA testing and have found out that I have an enormous family of cousins, but still I struggle with who I am. I have no name, no mother, no father, no brothers or sisters and I have an emptiness inside that nobody will ever know. It is probably true that my parents are no longer alive, but at 62 years of age, I think that everybody over the age of 18 has a right to know who they are, where they came from and be allowed to have a family. I want to thank you all for your time and effort on this and please allow this for all of us. Thank you. James Naka

February 3, 2014

Dear members of the Human Services Committee,

I am writing to you in a plea of support for **SB 2188, Relating to Adoption Records**. I was *not* adopted, but my father was. (His name is Jim Ryan, and he's also writing to you.) My dad was born in Honolulu in 1952, where he was adopted two weeks later before eventually being raised in Minneapolis, in turn where he and my mother raised me. (I now go to school in California.)

I believe that my dad's adoption has worked to define his sense of self more than any other event in his life. His adopted parents are wonderful, loving people, but he's clearly not *from* them – he's not *like* them at all.

My dad grew up constantly surrounded by his sixteen cousins on his mom's side, all of whom descended biologically from the family's patriarch and matriarch, his mother's parents. Each summer, the whole extended family stayed at a lake cabin that was built by the patriarch in 1936. I believe it was during these long summers around his cousins that my dad was instilled with a strong sense of not fitting in. His cousins were alike one another, and alike their parents and their common grandparents, but my dad was different. I suspect but don't know that they may have even teased him for being adopted into the family. He's told me that my grandmother often berated him with the stinging *Why can't you be more like your cousins, the Hurleys?*

These feelings of being different and being isolated led to constant fantasies about being reclaimed by his birth family, who in these daydreams would fully accept him – would be *like* him. Emotional wounds like these are deep and permanent. Opening up my father's birth records won't heal him, but it would be a major step toward reconstituting something that was taken from him. Everyone deserves to know where they come from, to know why they are the way they are, and to be close to the people that are like them. I think the bedrock of a common origin is what builds up the most intimate feelings you have for your family – feelings you could never have for someone who is just a friend, or even a spouse, for whom you feel intimately in other,

different ways.

I have a stake in this too. My whole life, I've been obsessed with my genealogy, with thoughts of how the qualities that make my parents and my grandparents individually unique mixed together to make me who I am. I think often about my ancestors further back – people that are like me who lived lives in other times, other places, who made little decisions, like moving to this town or getting to know this person, that made it possible for me to even be born.

For one half of me, these sorts of thoughts are lost into an oblivion. I don't know where my dad from, so I don't know where that half of me came from. I can trace my mother's father's bloodline back to a village in Austria in the 1500s, but I can't trace my dad's line past 1952 in Honolulu. It's like he was born from ether, and this is just because his birth parents had a reason, probably a good one in the context that it was made, to keep themselves hidden from him. But that was over sixty years ago – his birth parents are almost surely dead, but because these records are sealed, the birth parents still remain hidden from my dad, and from me and from my children and their children and so forth, because of a reason two people had sixty years ago.

For adoptees, birth records are their only access to the profound knowledge of their ancestry, of perhaps the most crucial part of their human identity. When these remain sealed into perpetuity, it goes beyond protecting the birth parents from whatever shame motivated them to seal the record in the first place: It blocks off perhaps the most intimate human knowledge one can have about themselves and their origin, forever, long past the lifetimes of the birth parents, past even the lifetimes of the adoptees, for their children won't know who they are either.

James Ryan
Santa Cruz, Calif.

February 3, 2014

Dear members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Jim Ryan, and I am writing you in support of SB 2188, Relating to Adoption Records. I live in Minneapolis, MN, and was born in Honolulu on June 29, 1952. Two weeks after my birth, I was adopted by loving parents; they are both living and support me in this effort. I was told from a very young age that I was adopted and chosen and that I was their son.

During my life, from as far back as I can remember, I've felt like a square peg in a round hole. Through no fault of anyone, I never quite fit in. Inside I just felt something was missing. As I got older and had my own children, it became more apparent to me that I didn't know where I came from, and that in some way I didn't know who I was. What was missing was the identity that you gain from being in a biological family -- not every adoptee I've talked to along the way feels that deficit, but a good number of them do. My sister, who was also adopted, could care less. None of my feelings have anything to do with anyone in my adopted family.

In the late 1980s and mid 90s I made some efforts to look into finding my birth records, to no avail. Now in my 60s, I still yearn to know. From what is known to me about my birth mother, she would be around 88 years old if living, but may have family. My mother told me she had at least two brothers, was from Iowa, worked as a nurse in Honolulu during her pregnancy, and that no father was listed on the birth certificate. That is all I know at this time.

I'm married and have five children and six grandchildren. My oldest grandchild was given up by my daughter, who gave birth to her at age 15. The two have since reunited, and it's been such a blessing for all of us, especially the two of them. This happened with the full support of the adoptive parents.

Of my children and grandchildren, three have disabilities. I, myself, have diabetes, high blood pressure, and suffered a stroke at age 57. In our case, my birth records could provide medically important information.

I totally support adoption for the sake of the child and the birth parents. I realize that opening all adoption records has its pros and cons, but I believe, while still realizing that not all outcomes would be perfect, that passing this bill would bring about healing and closure for many, including myself. One of my sons also has great interest in my adoption records for his own reasons -- one being just that he loves me, cares about me, and realizes how important this is to me -- and he is also writing in favor of this bill.

I appreciate your consideration of this legislation for both birth families, and adoptees and their families.

Thank You,

Jim Ryan

SB2188

Submitted on: 2/3/2014

Testimony for HMS on Feb 4, 2014 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Barra	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am in strong support of SB 2188. I would like to offer a different perspective on the issue of adoption records, then you may have heard. My mother was adopted in Hawaii in 1945. She did not seek her birth parents until she was in her 50's, compelled by a cancer diagnosis. When she did, with my assistance, she was told she would have to pay a search agent in order to locate her birth parents. We were both stunned that she would have to pay a contracted search agent in order to just know the names of her birth parents. Not only did this process seem unfair, the price was extremely high. She was deterred but decided to save up and proceed with the process at a later date. A few months later however, she passed away. She never had a chance to find her parents or at least know their names. I don't want this to happen to any other family. This bill will make process easier and equitable and I urge the committee to pass the bill. In addition I would like to add that now that my mother has passed away, I have no way of ever knowing the names of my grandparents. I have no rights to my mothers adoption records at all. My grandparents, if still alive, would be in their late 80's. All I want to know is their names. There needs to be a process in place for people like my self to be able to view adoption records of their deceased parents. I have a right to know who my family is and there should be a process for me to obtain this information. I don't want to endanger the current bills passage with my request but I would urge the committee to look into this issue and perhaps hear a bill related to it next year. Thank you for the opportunity to share my story.

SB2188

Submitted on: 1/29/2014

Testimony for HMS on Feb 4, 2014 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
jennifer rosa	Individual	Support	No

Comments: My name is Jennifer and I really want you guys to know how important this is. My dad was adopted out of Hawaii and all his life he wondered where and who his family is. I think everyone who is adopted should have the right to access their records to know who their family is and if they want to contact them they have the right. Going your whole life without knowing where you come is a horrible thing to have. Please please pass this and allow my father the right to know who his family is and also to maybe make our family a little bigger!!!

SB2188

Submitted on: 2/2/2014

Testimony for HMS on Feb 4, 2014 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
JoAnne Stanik	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I feel it is important for adoptees to obtain their original birth certificate.....it is actually a matter of life or death for a majority of them. They deserve the same rights as any other US Citizen. Even if it goes no further, just knowing their original name and names of their biological parents, it helps to bring closure to many unanswered questions that haunt adoptees every day. I also understand how important it is for adoptees to be able to acquire family medical history. I personally helped an adoptee who was dying of cancer. He only had 4 months to live when we were finally able to locate his biological family. Had he known that cancer ran rampant in his family, they may have detected his cancer in the early stages.....but he had no clue. He is now deceased and died at age 43. I realize adoption was created to protect children and place these children with parents who longed to have children. However once the adoptee becomes of age, it should be their God-given right to know who they are if they so choose. After all, the adoptee did not enter into any type of contract, so they should not be bound to an agreement signed by others. The current laws are so antiquated that even other countries have better laws in place when it comes to adoption. It seems that our country is only concerned about children until they become an adult, and then after that they don't care what happens to them. We've seen many young women as early as age 23 or 24 die of breast cancer because they had no idea it ran in the family. It leaves their children without a mother. The State of Oregon has open records and it has worked successfully for them , it has not lowered the rate of adoption, nor increased the abortion rate. Please see to it that see to it that Hawaii changes the adoption laws so that adoptees have the right to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate and thus possibly save their own life and that of their descendants. Thank you, JoAnne Stanik

SB2188

Submitted on: 2/2/2014

Testimony for HMS on Feb 4, 2014 13:00PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Naka	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am James Naka's wife. I have to tell you that we have been searching for his biological parents for the past 16 years and this has been one of the most difficult tasks I have ever had to undertake. I am not adopted but have seen the anguish, heartbreak and disappointment on my husband's face since we began this. Every time we had a possible breakthrough, another road block would appear. James AKA Jeff Guillemette has never known real parents. He was adopted and raised by a very strict military family who gave him all the material things he needed. But, he never knew why he "was given away." He always felt there was something wrong with him. The stigma of someone being pregnant was too much for most families to bear, so the shame often led to adoption. But today, the kids of yesteryear have questions and a longing to know their roots and their biological families. Some of the people in the 70's and 80's are looking for someone to call a blood relative and I have to tell you, I hear their plea and feel that today, anyone over the age of 18 should be allowed to find their families. My husband has numerous medical questions and his health issues should be allowed to be shared with other members of the family. He has done numerous DNA testing and has found out he has thousands of cousins. He knows what line his father comes from and that his Mother was Asian. But, he still has NO family. Nobody to call mother or father or sister or brother and it is a sad thing to listen to him talk about wanting to know and unable to do anything about this. We are so grateful that Senator Gabbard took this adoption act for a bill to everyone and I know a lot of people have sent in their testimony. Please do the right thing for all adoptees and their families and vote this bill into legislation so everyone can have a family. Thank you so much for taking your time to listen to a very loving wife who desperately wants her husband and all other adoptees and birth parents to be allowed to know who their family is. Think how you would feel if you didn't know yours. Thank you again. Patty Guillemette

SB2188

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for HMS on Feb 4, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Naka	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am sending this testimony from a gentleman named Matt who belongs to theadoptiondatabase@googlegroups.com, and was submitted just a few days ago. Through this group, they have found his family for him and these are his feelings about this. I have received permission from them to share this with you. I have spent many years thinking about my birth family, curious about siblings and various other things I imagine all adoptees think about from time to time. I was raised by wonderful parents and had two sisters as part of my family, we lived and still do live a rather decent life, with lots of love. But there was always going to be something missing, something not complete and I would always have some unanswered questions lingering in my heart. When you called me only 5 days before Christmas to tell me you believed you had found my birth family, well, I was at first apprehensive, but ultimately elated by the news. I needed to take a moment to process the emotions involved, it was quite overwhelming. This was a moment in my life I knew was special, I felt it in my heart and I would never have this back again. What my next step was going to be would change my life forever, either for the good or the bad, a change was going to occur. Not only was this a change for me, but for the folks on the other side of this as well, and I needed to consider them as well, not knowing how this has or has not impacted their lives. Wow, what a moment that was, standing at the threshold of my heritage, 44 years of questions only moments away from being answered. It almost felt as though I was watching this unfold in a movie. I hesitated only briefly, but a couple of short hours later I was on the phone with my birth mothers brother, my Uncle John, and his wife, my Aunt Ginger. The reunion had begun, and I don't know how other people feel in these situations, but I immediately felt at home, I felt as though I have known these people my entire life. After all, I had been thinking about them and imagining what a life with them might have been like for many many years. This day turned out to be even more than expected, both good and not so good. The sad news was that my mother died tragically many years ago in an accident. Every year, on my birthday (other times as well, but on my birthday in particular), I would think of my mother, and wonder if she knew it was my birthday, if she was thinking about me the way I was thinking about her. I would think about how difficult her decision must have been, how heartbreaking it must be to give up a child. I wondered at times when I would look up at the sky, feeling the sun on my face if she was looking as well and the warmth on my face was her hands touching me and her heart filling me with love thinking about me. I wanted her to know so desperately that I was doing OK and that I understood everything. That no matter what had happened, no matter why, I loved her, I loved her unconditionally with all the love a son could have for a mother. I felt her close in my heart every day of my life. Although I did not meet her, I did know her. I felt her in my blood, I heard her in my dreams and I loved her,

I loved her very much. To know she is not here for me to look into her beautiful eyes, see her bright smile or hold her in my arms is more painful to me than I could have ever imagined. I am certain she is with God, she is at peace and she knows everything she needs to know. Still I will miss her, I will miss this woman that I never met, but never felt separated from, with incredible passion. The good news, and this is so incredibly wonderful for me, is that I have a full sister, and that she knew who I was and had also been looking for me. We have spoken every day since, and we feel as though we have been present in each others lives all this time. The connection we have is remarkable, and the physical similarities between me, my mother, my sister and my three children is astonishing. Though I guess the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree. I want to thank you for helping in facilitating this reunion, it is a true gift from God and we are all so incredibly grateful for what you have done. Thank you very much. I will be heading to see them in a few weeks and can send you a picture of our reunion. Thank you and God bless you... --
Matt

To whom it may concern,

I'm a New York state resident, a combat military veteran, a married father of two young children & I'm also an Adoptee. Every adult adoptee should have the basic human right to know how their life began. To go through life without knowing how it all began, is a tremendous burden that leaves a hole in the heart & soul of most adoptees. Would you be happy reading a book with the first chapter missing? I think not. I've always known that I was adopted and I think that was the best way for my parents to have handled this. To go through our lives without knowing our heritage and biological medical information not only affects the adoptee but it also affects their children as well. As you can see, this issue is extremely important to me as well as many others that not only live in Hawaii & also live outside of Hawaii. Your state, along with others with pending Adoptee Rights legislation, are being watched. Passing these bills will end the decades adult adoptees being treated as second-class citizens.

As for myself, I spent over 30 years of on and off searching trying to find my biological parents. My search is not to replace my family which I would never do because I love them with every ounce of my being. The reason I search is because ever since I was 13, I wanted to know the basic life questions that every person usually has as they grow up. Who do I look like, what do my birth parents look like, what's their religion, where did they grow up, and biological medical histories, ect. But since adoptees have their birth records sealed, we don't have the privilege of turning our heads to the nearest relative or friend and getting answers to these questions.

After over 30 years of searching, this past October 2013, I was able to locate my natural mother who thankfully is alive. We visited each other several times and we speak about once a week on the telephone and she was very very happy to have been found and to know that the child she gave up for adoption in the late 1960s is alive and doing well. My biological mother ended up spending the rest of her life with my biological father. He unfortunately passed away from injuries resulting from a car accident in 2009. Over 95 percent biological mother's want to know how children are doing and either never asked for privacy or never wanted privacy.

I'm sure you've already seen statistics from states with open records that show that abortion rates do not go up and adoption rates do not go down with open adoption records. Furthermore, there is no violation of privacy and confidentiality because if I'm not mistaken in 2000 and 1999, I believe it was Oregon and Tennessee had their open adoption record laws challenged in the federal appeals court and the Court ruled that there weren't any privacy violations. So, the passing of this law is the right thing to do.

Knowing where we come from, completes us as people.

Please open adoptee birth records in your state. Many people outside of your state are watching the outcome of your vote on this Bill. Thank you very much for your time.

Michael Schoer
1798 East 53rd Street
Brooklyn, NY 11234
Wanttofish@optonline.net
917-747-1039 cell #

SB2188

Submitted on: 1/27/2014

Testimony for HMS on Feb 4, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Priscilla Stone Sharp	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: I am writing in support of SB2188. Although I am not a resident of Hawai'i, I am a mother who lost a child to adoption in 1964 (reunited in 1986) and am very passionate about the absolute right of every person to their own personal birth information. I have spent the past 25 years of my life, full-time since retirement seven years ago, advocating for adoption reform, adoptee and parental rights, and providing Search Angel services free of charge. I have personally facilitated more than 500 family reunions. From my experience and knowledge, more than 95% of the mothers are happy to be found and look forward to having their lost children back in their lives. There is simply no justifiable reason to keep adoptees' birth certificates sealed. This is such an important piece of legislation that is way overdue for passage. Especially in this age of information technology and the generally-accepted acknowledgement of the importance of knowing one's family history, heritage and the identity of those to whom one is blood related, to force adopted persons - and only adopted persons - to live in the dark ages of secrets and lies is cruel and ludicrous. As a basic human right, adopted people deserve the opportunity enjoyed by every other citizen of saying "I know" instead of "I wonder." We have the examples and experiences of several other states that have restored dignity, justice and respect to people whose records were sealed because of adoption - OR, AL, ME, NH, RI, IL, among them - where tens of thousands of adoptees have received their original birth certificates with no negative repercussions whatsoever. I hope and pray Hawai'i Legislators will now step up and do the right thing. Priscilla Stone Sharp Mother of Loss to Adoption,/Search Angel/Adoptee Rights Advocate www.priscillasharp.org

SB2188

Submitted on: 1/26/2014

Testimony for HMS on Feb 4, 2014 13:15PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeffrey Dickman	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: My name Jeff Dickman and I am a resident of Santa Ana, California. I'm an adoptee who is denied access to my original un-amended birth certificate and adoption agency files. I'm also 57 years old and concerned that the opportunity to locate my family, including other brothers and sister and cousins is fading. There is nothing stronger than the bond of a family, even one I have never meet. My birth family and I, although separated, still have common living kin as well as ancestors. However all of that is denied to me. I am another incarnation of an American second class citizen, and I am tired of that status. My right to know my family name, my history and the love and fellowship that goes with that was, from the first moment of my live, out of my reach. I was stripped of my family and denied the right to ever meet them. Please consider allowing adoptees to have the right to know their name, history and culture. The outdated laws that deny people this basic human information creates a terrible stress on adoptees, as it has for me. For over forty years I have wondered about and longed to meet anyone who is my kin. I pray that you will grant adoptees the opportunity in Hawaii the chance to know their past and improve their lives. Most Sincerely, Jeff Dickman 1218 N. French St. Santa Ana, CA 92701