

**March 16, 2023**

**SF 1279 May Quade Pro James M. Hamilton**

My name is James M. Hamilton. I am an adoptive father, a birth uncle, a retired attorney, and a volunteer with the Minnesota Coalition for Adoption Reform (MCAR).

**Senate File 1279 does three things:**

**It restores adult adoptees' access to their original birth information upon request;**  
**It creates a means for birth parents to notify biological children who request their birth information whether or not the parent wishes contact and, if so, in what fashion;**  
**and**  
**It repeals existing laws on the subject, laws that do not work as intended in any way.**

**The bill is the result of the collaborative efforts of many organizations some years ago, in a process initiated by Children's Home Society and facilitated by the Citizens League.** Those at the table included state agencies, public and private adoption agencies and other interested parties, including MCAR. All members of the adoption triad were represented in that process. I participated in this process and was among those who drafted what became SF 1279.

I have helped many navigate Minnesota's current regulatory maze, on a pro bono basis, because none of my clients could have navigated these waters on their own or have afforded to pay for legal services. Without the time, money, and knowledge required, our current laws are a cruel joke on Minnesota's more than 130,000 adoptees.

Some are concerned that restoring the right of adoptees to obtain their own original birth records threatens some birth parents. While **reunion is not the purpose of this bill**, some adoptees obviously may seek to know their biological relatives using the information they receive. **Reunion efforts are not a matter the state can control.** Advances in DNA technology and the increasing number of DNA databases have rendered obsolete any protection our current laws may afford such birth parents.

**SF 1279 addresses such concerns in a reasonable and considerate manner, through the use of Contact Preference Forms.** In addition, **adoptees whose birth certificates are the subject of requests for non-disclosure will be advised of that fact.**

**Less than one-half of one percent of the state's more than 260,000 birth parents, have requested that their offspring's birth certificates not be released.** Those who believe Minnesota's laws protect birth parents of any age or era from discovery are very much mistaken. As DNA databases grow, their discovery grows more certain. **SF 1279 does not open Pandora's Box. DNA already has done that.**

**Please vote for SF 1279 as introduced. It is the right thing to do and the right time to do so.**

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