



Illinois adoptees will have access to birth parents' names

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State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz was adopted and plans to take advantage of the new law she helped pass. (WJBC file photo)
A new law takes effect next month regarding birth certificates for those who were adopted.

Adoptees born 1946 or after will be able to apply for their original birth certificates, which contain the names of their birth parents, as of Nov. 15. Starting last year, those born prior to 1946 could apply. The law was structured that way because the law sealing the records took effect in 1946. The pre-1946 records were sealed retroactively by a 1986 law.

Birth parents may prevent the release of the original birth certificate, but they would have to step forward and do so. They also may attach other restrictions, such as "do not contact." Any restrictions will remain in place until the birth parent changes them or dies.

State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago), who sponsored the law and who herself will take advantage of it, expects few birth parents to place restrictions on access.

Feigenholtz says those who do apply probably just want the piece of paper. She says those looking for a reunion have, for some time now, had other ways to accomplish that.

The law affects 250,000 people.

Applicants must be over 18. Applications are available from the Department of Public Health, office of Vital Records.