

News...

...from the Illinois House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Quarter of a Million Illinois Adoptees Born After 1946 May Begin Requesting Original Birth Certificates on November 15th

(Chicago, IL) – Next week, Illinois will become one of the few—and the most populous—U.S. states to authorize all adopted persons over the age of 21 to request non-certified copies of their original birth certificates (OBCs). Although adoptees born prior to January 1, 1946, have had unrestricted access to their OBCs since May of 2010 when Governor Pat Quinn signed this ground-breaking legislation into law, those born after 1946 had to wait an additional year and a half before accessing their original birth documents, which typically will include the names and last known addresses of one or both birth parents.

Designed to give birth parents of post-1946 adoptees ample time to sign up with the Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange (IARMIE) and either indicate their wishes regarding contact or specifically request that their names not be released during their lifetime, this 18-month waiting period will end on November 15, 2011. While birth parents may continue to indicate their interest in contact or anonymity to the IARMIE after that date, those who wish to make sure that their interest in contact or desire for anonymity is transmitted to their birth child when he or she requests a copy of their original birth certificate should make their wishes known to the IARMIE prior to November 15, 2011 (or prior to their child's 21st birthday if he or she was born after November 15, 1980).

Since May of 2010, the Illinois Dept. of Public Health has released non-certified copies of original birth certificates to 876 Illinois adoptees living in 41 U.S. states and six foreign countries. While the majority of the requests (78%) have come from adopted persons who were born in Cook County, IDPH has thus far released original birth certificates to adoptees who were born in 49 of Illinois' 102 counties.

In addition, as of November 1, 2011, 4033 birth parents had signed up with the IARMIE; 3708 of the registered birth parents have opted for some form of contact with their surrendered child, while 325 have requested that their names be withheld during their lifetime. Of the 4033 birth parents who have signed up with the Registry, 3147 (78%) have voluntarily provided their birth children with medical background information.

According to State Representative Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago), the chief sponsor of the new law and one of the estimated 250,000 adoptees who will be eligible to receive her original birth certificate beginning November 15th, "These results are very encouraging. Although we are one of the few states

that has provided birth parents with this kind of opt-out provision, the 92% of birth parents who have expressed an interest in contact through the IARMIE is comparable to the percentages of birth parents who welcomed contact in unrestricted access states like Maine and Oregon.”

Adopted persons over the age of 21 who wish to request a non-certified copy of their original birth certificate are required to complete a simple request form and mail it in to IDPH in Springfield, along with a \$15 check or money order and a copy of a government-issued driver’s license or ID.

To access the request form as well as step-by-step instructions for obtaining a non-certified copy of an original birth certificate or, if you are a birth parent, for relaying an interest in contact or a desire to remain anonymous to a birth child over the age of 21, go to: www.newillinoisadoptionlaw.com.