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Illinois Adoptee Access to OBCs Stands, Additional Access Stalls

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Recently, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published an article titled, [Illinois adoption records legislation fails amid abortion debate](#). The article discussed the failure of open records adoption legislation in Illinois. Since I recently [blogged](#) on the success of the ‘OBC (Original Birth Certificate) adoptee access law’ that passed in 2010, the article was confusing, and as it turns out, a tad misleading.

To assure that adoptees understand the status of records access in Illinois, I contacted the office of Illinois State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz. Feigenholtz, an adoptee herself, sponsored the adoption legislation in question.

A representative from her office contacted me and explained that the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article refers to an entirely separate piece of proposed legislation. The legislation, which is currently “postponed for consideration” refers to access to the adoption decree. An adoption decree is a document, filed at the time of the adoption. This is a sealed court document. However, adoptive parents or the ‘attorney of record’ can access this document at anytime, without any special cause or reason.

The new bill, proposes that adult adoptees be allowed access to the adoption decree if they:

- Have their Original Birth Certificate, with no redacted info (adoptees not subject to denial of information)

OR

- Have a letter from the state saying that their original birth certificate could not be found.

While the new bill might be controversial, because of personal and potentially damaging information that could be included on the decree (i.e. a birthmother’s unfit status, criminal record, drug use), this is NOT the reason the bill failed, after the last round of discussion.

Instead, debate on this bill was about abortion. Lobbyists claimed (and some state reps agreed) that if a birthmother thinks the adoptee will have access to the adoption decree, they are more likely to choose abortion.

Hello? First of all, adult adoptees already have access to their original birth certificates in Illinois. Secondly, adoptive parents are already granted access to the document. So, if an adult adoptee asks their adoptive parents to help out, they can already get this document. Plus, the bill would not allow adoptee's access to the decree, if the birthmother has asked for a "denial of information" or to "opt out" of contact. So this legislation makes absolutely zero change to a birthmother's right to confidentiality.

Abortion rates have nothing to do with the proposed legislation. Birdbrain lobbyists should actually think before they squawk!

You can follow the progress of this bill at the [Illinois General Assembly site](#) or you can visit [Illinois State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz's site](#) to learn more.