

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Subject: Rhode Island Restores the Human Right for Adoptees to Obtain Their Original Birth Certificates

Hartford, Connecticut: July 1, 2011 – Governor Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island signed into law today the **human right** for adult adoptees born in Rhode Island to obtain a non-certified copy of their original birth certificates (OBC). Rhode Island removed that existing right from adoptees in 1944. Senate Bill 0478 SUB A which passed unanimously in both the Rhode Island House and Senate is legislation that balances the rights of adoptees to receive their OBC while allowing birthparents to indicate their desire for contact by their birth son or daughter.

Rhode Island now becomes the *seventh* state in America to allow **all** its adult adoptee's to access to their OBC along with Alabama, Alaska, Kansas, Maine, New Hampshire, and Oregon. Rhode Island is now the *third* state in New England to restore the right for all adult adoptees in their state to obtain their OBC. New Hampshire (2004) and Maine (2007) and Rhode Island (2011) all removed the existing right from their adoptees but corrected this injustice by *passing retroactive legislation* allowing all its adult adoptees to obtain their OBC. In these three states, over 400 legislators, over 70% of its legislators voted in favor of restoring the human right to its native born adult adoptees to obtain their OBC.

New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island all passed legislation that balances the rights of adoptees to receive their OBC while allowing birthparents to indicate their desire for contact by their birth son or daughter. The *contact preference option* provided for in these states allows birth parents three options for contact with their biological child as follows:

- I would like to be contacted.
- I do not want to be contacted
- I would like to be contacted through an intermediary

ACCESS CONNECTICUT would like to congratulate all the members of the Rhode Island Legislature and Governor Chafee for recognizing that Rhode Island adoptees have been denied the **human right** that all other residents of Rhode Island have – the right to obtain non-certified copies of their original, un-amended birth certificates from the vital records office. *ACCESS CONNECTICUT* supports passing legislation in Connecticut similar to New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island that balances the rights of adoptees to receive their OBC while allowing birthparents to indicate their desire for contact by their birth son or daughter. Connecticut removed that existing right from its adoptees in 1974

Sincerely,
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