

An ADOPTION BILL OF RIGHTS

WHEREAS adoption is not intended as a punishment, specifically to birthparents or adoptees, for any action or inaction on their part; nor is it intended as a reward, specifically to adoptive parents, for any action or inaction on their part; and

WHEREAS adoption is not a single act isolated in time for any of its parties, but rather a life-long process with profound and far-reaching effects on each of its parties; and

WHEREAS the parties to adoption are free citizens, guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and, notwithstanding the special nature of their relationship, are entitled by the 14th Amendment of the Constitution to equal protection under the law among other citizens, and are capable of invoking the protection of the law and adequately protected by it as are other citizens; and

WHEREAS the Constitution of the United States of America, through the 13th Amendment, prohibits the keeping of any citizen in chattel status; and

WHEREAS adoption as an institution does not exist to perpetuate jobs for well-meaning professionals, nor guarantee income to private or public agencies, nor to provide a resource for heredity vs. environmental studies, nor serve any individual or group other than the principals involved; and

WHEREAS adoption is intended as a loving, giving and humane means for parents to insure a permanent, secure and loving family for children they, themselves, cannot continue to parent and as a loving, giving and satisfying means for people to build families without giving birth;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that adoption law and practice shall be rescinded and/or revised to adequately reflect the foregoing statements; to reinstate and affirm the constitutional rights of all parties to adoption; to reflect the emancipation of all adoption-related adults; to reflect the needs of the immediate principals to the adoption, and not those whose relationship is merely tangential or non-existent;

TO WIT:

Adopted adults shall have the same access to records kept about them as any other citizen, specifically original birth records, court and agency records of adoption, on request.

Birthparents and adoptive parents shall have equal access to these records when the adoptee reaches majority.

Birthparents shall have accurate and on-going information about their birthchild's health, well-being and other non-identifying information pertaining to the child's interests and development during the child's minority years.

Adoptees shall have access to information in kind regarding their birthparents, at any time, on request.

Updated medical information shall be transmitted from one party to the others without question or delay.

The nature of the relationship between birth and adoptive families shall be determined by them alone, and this relationship need not be limited to what is traditionally practiced in adoption. Parties to adoption shall be encouraged to recognize the value of openness and honesty in adoption and shall be urged to ascribe to these values to the extent that they are comfortable in doing so.

The rights of any one party herein stated may not be abrogated or denied by any other citizen, party to the adoption or external to it.

Proposed Resolution for the American Adoption Congress – 1979 – Gail Hanssen, Milford, MA. Printed in many adoption reform movement newsletters including one from Orphan Voyage where Jean Paton added the comment “Amen”.