



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# **TOM LARSON**

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## **Testimony on Assembly Bill 17 April 23, 2013**

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of Assembly Bill 17.

The issue AB 17 seeks to address was brought to my attention by Rep. Nick Milroy, who has a constituent who was adopted, along with her siblings, by her mother's second husband after the children's father died. Now adults, they would like to restore their father's name to their birth certificates. You will be hearing their testimony today.

Under current law, when a person is adopted, the state registrar generally must issue a new birth certificate that includes the names of the adoptive parents. The original birth certificate, with the name of the birth parents, is impounded and accessible only under certain circumstances.

AB 17 permits an adult who had been adopted to request a court order for the registrar to issue a new birth certificate that includes the information from the adoptee's original birth certificate, including the birth parents' names. The court must grant the petition if the identities of the birth parents are known and each birth parent who is still alive does not object.

Receiving a new birth certificate under AB 17 would not change the legal relationships between the adoptee and his or her adoptive parents, nor would it restore any legal relationships between the adoptee and his or her birth parents. In addition, Assembly Amendment 1, which I introduced at the request of the Department of Health Services, specifies that the new birth certificate may not include the adoptee's birth name, if it is different from the adoptee's current name. In other words, an adoptee who wishes to assume his or her birth name would still have to go through the formal name-change process.

AB 17 is a reintroduction of 2011 Assembly Bill 12, which Rep. Steve Kestell and Representative Milroy introduced last session. AB 12 enjoyed support on both sides of the aisle, as does AB 17, and the Assembly Committee on Children and Families voted 7-0 to recommend passage. Unfortunately, time simply ran out, and AB 12 never got a floor vote, which is why I hope the committee will act promptly so that AB 17 can make it through the legislative process.

Thank you again, and I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

