



Access Massachusetts

is a grassroots effort dedicated to passing legislation that will restore the **human right** for all adopted persons to have access to their original birth certificates (OBCs).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why do we need to amend MA law?

It is human right to have a record of one's birth.

Current Massachusetts law denies this basic human right to adopted persons born in Massachusetts between July 17, 1974 and January 1, 2008.

Adopted persons born in the "gap years" should have the same human right as all other people born in Massachusetts.

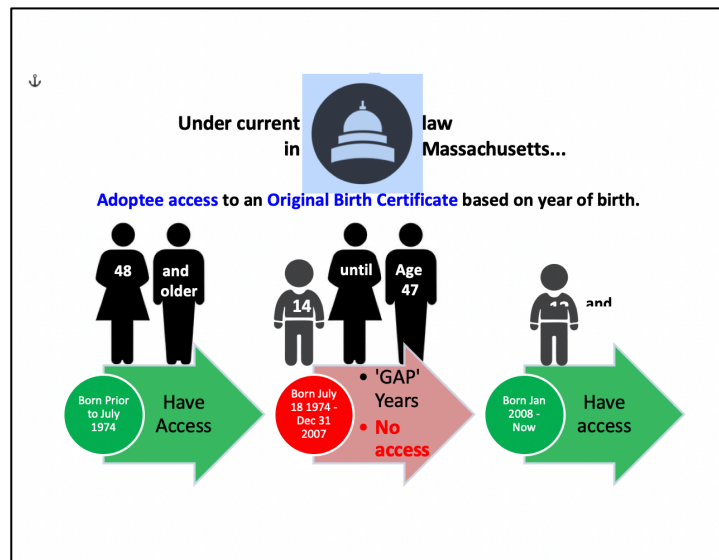
H.2294 and S.1440 – now pending in the MA legislature – would right this wrong.

Don't adopted people have birth certificates?

Yes, but their birth certificates are amended at the time of adoption. The names of the birth/first/original parents are deleted, and replaced by the name(s) of adoptive parent(s).

The adopted person's original name is deleted, and replaced with the name chosen by the adoptive family.

Who has access to their original birth certificates under current MA law?



Contact Access Massachusetts: website: www.OBCforMA.org
Email: OBCforMA@gmail.com, Facebook.com/OBCforMA, Twitter: @OBCforMA

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Were birth parents promised confidentiality?

Not one surrender document (in Massachusetts or any other state) has ever been produced that indicates that birth parents were promised confidentiality. Birth/first/original parents could never have been guaranteed confidentiality for the following reasons:

- At the time of relinquishment there cannot be certainty that an adoption will actually occur. Since birth certificates are not amended until adoption, if there is not an adoption, the birth certificate remains unchanged and is not sealed.
- Under MA law, a relinquishment of parental rights is unconditional. That means there can be no additional requirements or expectations or promises - no conditions - including that a parent's identity will not be revealed.
- Upon petition by an adopted person, a court can unseal an adoption record and can disclose parents' identities.
- Many adoptees have used the Internet to search and have found their birth/first/original parents.
- Birth parents who relinquished their children before 1974 clearly knew identifying information would be available to their adopted child when they turned 18 years of age.

Would H.2294/S1440 open adoption records?

No. The bills pending in Massachusetts simply allow all adopted persons equal access to their original birth certificates, regardless of the years of their birth.

Amendment to M.G.L. Chapter 210 sections which govern access to adoption records, is not proposed in these bills.

What do you say to people who think there's a connection between access to birth certificates and rates of abortions?

In states that allow adoptees to access their birth certificates, the abortion rate is generally lower than the national average, while adoption rates are higher.

How can I find more information about H.2294 and S.1440?

Please visit Access Massachusetts's website at www.OCforMA.org or contact us via e-mail at OBCforMA@gmail.com .