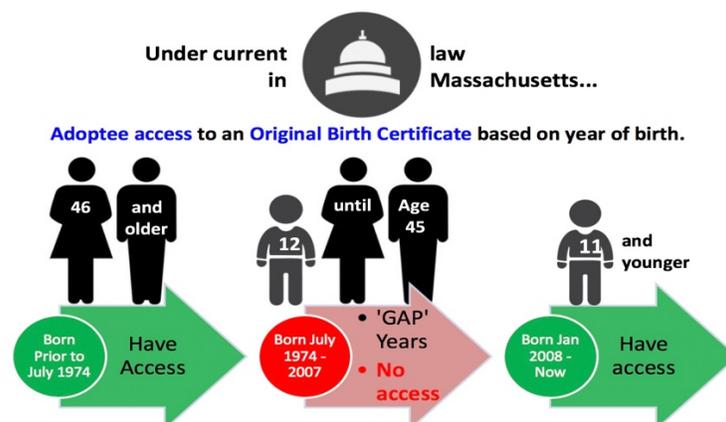


- Many adoptees have used the Internet to search and have found their birth parents.
  - The availability of DNA testing negates arguments about privacy and confidentiality since DNA databases routinely reveal relationships and parentage.
  - Not one surrender document (in Massachusetts or any other state) has ever been produced that indicates that birth parents were promised confidentiality.
  - Birth parents who relinquished their child before 1974 knew that identifying information would be available to their adopted child when they turned 18 years of age.
5. Denial of adopted persons' access to information related to their births and adoptions has potentially serious, negative consequences with regard to their physical and mental health. As recognized by the U.S. Surgeon General's office in its Family History Initiative, biological family medical history is vital to prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment, particularly with regard to diseases and conditions for which individuals may be genetically predisposed, such as heart disease, cancer, and certain mental health conditions. (Donaldson Institute, 11/07)
  6. Allowing access to birth certificates does not lead to an increase in abortions. In fact, 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.
  7. In New England, New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island an overwhelming majority of legislators voted in favor of restoring the human right to native-born adult adoptees to obtain their OBCs.
  8. Only 1 in every 2000 birth mothers has requested not to be contacted by their birth son or daughter. This clearly demonstrates that birth parents in overwhelming numbers do not object to adoptees contacting them after receiving their original birth certificates. (American Adoption Congress)
  9. This bill is about restoring the **human right** of adoptees born in the "gap years" to be treated just like everyone else in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.





## 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).

### Talking Points

#### AN ACT GRANTING EQUAL ACCESS TO ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES TO ALL PERSONS BORN IN MASSACHUSETTS

1/2020

1. This House Bill (H.1892, filed by Representatives Sean Garballey and Daniel Cullinane) and Senate Bill (file by Senator Anne Gobi) S.1267 will restore the **human right** for all adoptees born in Massachusetts, between July 17, 1974 and January 1, 2008 to obtain a non-certified copy their Original Birth Certificates (OBC) from the Registry of Vital Records, just like every other citizen of Massachusetts.
2. Current Massachusetts law is discriminatory. It denies some people born in Massachusetts the right to obtain their own original birth certificates, simply based upon the year of their birth. Massachusetts typically champions equal rights. Massachusetts should be leading other states on this issue of equality.
3. In 10 states, adult adoptees have access to their original birth certificates without restrictions, including 3 New England states: Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Alaska and Kansas have always allowed adult adoptees in their states to obtain copies of their OBC. Other states with no restrictions are: Alabama, Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, and New York, where access to OBCs was recently enacted. Ohio abolished "gap years" in 2013, allowing access to all persons born in Ohio. Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Tennessee allow access with some restrictions. Access to birth certificate bills have been filed in the current or most recent legislative sessions in: Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Montana, South Carolina, and Texas.
4. Opponents of OBC access claim that birth parents were promised confidentiality and that this bill would break that promise. In reality birth parents names could never be fully protected.
  - Original birth certificates are not altered until the time of adoption; if there is no adoption, identifying information about birth parents who relinquished parental rights, or whose rights were terminated, remains unsealed and accessible.
  - An adopted person can petition the court to get his or her identifying information.