

In 1995 the state of Tennessee enacted a law that has become the subject of heated controversy, which allows individuals over the age of twenty one, who were adopted as children, to find out the names, addresses, and other information that the state has about their birth parents. The law also has a provision, introduced in Australia, but never used before in the United States, under which birth parents may file a "contact veto," prohibiting the release of information about them unless the children agree not to initiate contact with them. Under the previous law in Tennessee, an adoptee, upon reaching the age of twenty one, could get non identifying information about her birth parents, such as ages, physical descriptions, religion, and education, and also could direct a state agency to request the birth parents for permission to release their identities. The laws of other states vary widely in regard to the above matters. Some states will give adoptees copies of their birth certificates, while others keep them strictly confidential. The previous policy in Tennessee of providing non identifying information is common in many states.

You are a state legislator. A proposal is up for a vote to enact a new law in your state similar to the above described Tennessee law. How do you vote, and why?

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