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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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December 21, 1994

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Reintroduction of Legislation

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Larry O. Sather

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry O. Sather".

When we return to session, I plan to reintroduce legislation (previously HB1081) which unanimously passed the House on October 5th, but unfortunately did not get through the Senate procedure before the end of session.

I am introducing this legislation again in response to the recognition within the medical and adoption communities that knowledge of family medical histories is vitally important for the long-term health of every individual.

Most of us are able to obtain this information, but adoptees can't be assured that they have all of the information because Pennsylvania's current adoption law doesn't account for situations where natural parents remember or find out about this information after the adoption's finalization.

While maintaining the confidentiality of the birth parent, my bill would insure that family medical history information about the natural parents include that which may be relevant to a potential hereditary or congenital medical problem reaches the adoptee whenever this information becomes known. The adoption community is supportive of this concept and recognizes the need for this amendment to the current law.

Should you wish to join me in co-sponsorship of this important legislation, please contact Nancy in my office at 7-3335.

FLOOR COMMENTS FOR HOUSE BILL 1081

* I INTRODUCED THIS BILL IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOGNITION WITHIN THE MEDICAL AND ADOPTION COMMUNITIES THAT KNOWLEDGE OF FAMILY MEDICAL HISTORIES IS VITALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE LONG-TERM HEALTH OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL

* MOST OF US ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN THIS INFORMATION BUT ADOPTEES CANT BE ASSURED THAT THEY HAVE ALL OF THIS INFORMATION BECAUSE PAS CURRENT ADOPTION LAW DOESNT ACCOUNT FOR SITUATIONS WHERE NATURAL PARENTS REMEMBER OR FIND OUT ABOUT THIS INFORMATION AFTER THE ADOPTIONS FINALIZATION

* FOR ADOPTEES THIS GAP IN THE LAW CAN HAVE TERRIBLE AND POTENTIALLY LIFE-THREATENING

6057
191-0

RAMIFICATIONS: (1) THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN ADEQUATE PREVENTATIVE OR EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE; AND (2) AS ADULTS THEY MAY NOT HAVE INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO THEIR FAMILY PLANNING WHICH MAY HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEIR CHILDRENS MEDICAL WELL-BEING

* WHILE MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE BIRTH PARENT MY BILL WOULD INSURE THAT FAMILY MEDICAL HISTORY INFORMATION ABOUT THE NATURAL PARENTS INCLUDING THAT WHICH MAY BE RELEVANT TO A POTENTIAL HEREDITARY OR CONGENITAL MEDICAL PROBLEM REACHES THE ADOPTEE WHENEVER THIS INFORMATION BECOMES KNOWN. THE ADOPTION COMMUNITY IS SUPPORTIVE OF THIS CONCEPT AND RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR THIS AMENDMENT TO THE CURRENT LAW

* I THINK WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO
CHILDREN WHO ARE BROUGHT INTO THIS WORLD
AND WHO ARE ADOPTED TO INSURE THAT THIS
MEDICAL INFORMATION ALWAYS REACHES THEM
AND I ASK THAT YOU SUPPORT THIS BILL

I'm pleased to say that the legislation was
passed unanimously by the House on October 5, 1994.
It is coming up the Judiciary ^{Sub}Committee and we hope
that it will be considered before the end of the session.
I am ready to reintroduce the legislation next session if
needed.

Larry: (Notes to remember)

MEDICAL HISTORY INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT IN A CENTRAL REGISTRY. THIS SYSTEM WOULD BE THE SAME AS RECORDS KEPT UNDER THE CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES LAW.

ONLY A COUPLE OF PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO THIS REGISTRY.

INFORMATION WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE TO EVERY COUNTY ASSISTANCE OFFICE.

THEREFORE, THE CONFIDENTIALITY FACTOR WILL BE UPHELD.

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March 10, 1995

The Honorable Robert C. Jubelirer
President Pro Tempore
Senate of Pennsylvania
Room 292 - Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Bob:

If you recall we previously discussed my legislation, House Bill 215, which provides for medical history information to be accessible to adoptees. HB215 passed the House on March 7th unanimously. I am enclosing copies of the bill in each stage of printer's numbers and copies of the amendments that were added.

The original intent of this legislation is most important to adoptees and I preferred that the bill remained clean. As happens, amendments were added to it since it deals with Title 23. I can live with most of the amendments added, except for Rep. Krebs amendment dealing with involuntary termination of parents rights.

The legislation has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Any assistance you can provide in having this legislation considered in the Senate would be greatly appreciated. I am available to discuss any concerns that you or others may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry O. Sather".

Larry O. Sather

LOS/nlp

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April 4, 1995

Nancy Newman

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Dear Nancy:

As per our telephone conversation I am enclosing 15 copies of House Bill 215, Printer's No: 1198, as it went to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I am also enclosing a copy of House Bill 215, P/N: 197, which is the original bill without any amendments. As I told you this is the legislation Rep. Sather would like to see moved along without a lot of delay. Also enclosing a copy of his remarks on this legislation.

I have spoken with Mr. Sather since you called. He would be happy to sit down with you and discuss this legislation. He mentioned that Wednesday, April 19th, might be a good day on his schedule to talk with you if you would be willing to come to Harrisburg in the morning. If not, we will reschedule at a mutually agreed to time later in the month or early May.

As I related to you this legislation is very important personally to Mr. Sather. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Paone".

Nancy Paone
for Representative Larry O. Sather

From: MHAUCK --LOCRSCS
To: NPAONE --LOCRSCS Paone Nancy

Date and time 03/01/95 11:22:05

*** Resending note of 03/01/95 11:21
FROM: Melanie
To: NFRYE --LOCRSCS Frye Neely T.

FROM: Melanie
SUBJECT: HB215

I wanted you to be aware that HB 215 which was reported out of H&HS Comm. yesterday MAY invite amendments because it is a Title 23 bill which also deals with child support and child custody. One amendment went in in committee. Rep. Sather is talking with the members who have historically been interested in this subject to discourage them from offering amendments to his bill. He would prefer to keep the bill limited to the medical information for adoptees. If you need additional information, please feel free to call.

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: June 20, 1995

SUBJECT: Talking Points

TO: Representative Sather

FROM: Lou Crocco, Research Analyst
Health and Human Services Committee (7-5873)

WHAT THIS BILL WOULD DO

House Bill 215 will amend the adoption act to require that medical information be provided about the natural parents whether or not this information is in existence or discoverable at the time of adoption regarding potential medical, hereditary or congenital problems.

This bill would require the department of welfare upon request to make available to courts, adoption agencies, and individuals, forms that enable parents who's rights have been terminated to register and update medical history information with the department and, with the court which entered the decree of termination. The department of Health will develop the content of the medical history information forms in consultation with the department of public welfare.

This medical history information will be edited before release by the department of Public Welfare to the adopted person. This editing will remove any information which would identify the adoptee's natural family.

WHY THIS BILL IS GOOD

We have the ability to enact legislation that would immediately make a difference in people's lives immediately. There are many children

and adults in Pennsylvania whose lives may be saved or changed for the better if they were to receive relevant health information.

This information is needed today not next year or next session.

We have all had the experience at the doctor's office, often we are asked, "Does your family have a history of cancer?" or "Are you allergic to penicillin anyone in your family allergic." We know the answer to these questions.

Who can we help? THIS INFORMATION IS EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT WHEN IT COMES TO THE DISEASES OF:

Children with Heart Defects.

Epilepsy

Juvenile Diabetes

Some times the answer to these questions changes the way we live our life and some time it changes the way we are given treatment by a medical profession. An adopted child has the same right to know as anyone else, would you want your kid's to know.

Close

Science and medicine has growing in leaps and bounds our citizen's who are adopted should be able to bennefit by these changes, knowing there birth family's relevant medical family could help. This bill will save lives, I need your help the kid's need your help.

COST

The program will cost the state \$50,000 a year.

Benefit

Children's health, children's lives.

WHY DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE

Court's deal directly with DPW already; Department of Public Welfare department of Children Youth and Families. Department of Public Welfare has made mistakes in the past these mistakes have been addressed. The problem was that there was a link between birth parent's and adoptive parents when it came to the child's social security number appearing on the MA card.

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July 6, 1995

The Honorable Robert C. Jubelirer
President Pro Tempore
Senate of Pennsylvania
Room 292 - Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Bob:

We are enclosing a copy of a letter I received today from the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference regarding House Bill 215. I must tell you that I am a little more than upset with this latest development.

When this legislation was first drafted and introduced over two years ago, the Catholic Conference was contacted for an opinion and position. They never responded. As a matter of fact, the first I heard from them was on June 21, 1995 and at that time I agreed to meet with them.

On Tuesday morning, June 27th, I, along with Lou Crocco from our staff, met with these people. At this meeting they assured me that they would not do anything at this time to delay passage of this legislation.

I believe the Catholic Conference really has no desire to have any adoption legislation enacted which does not suit their particular agenda. To put a good piece of legislation in jeopardy at this time because they didn't take the initiative to become involved at an earlier date is beyond my reasoning.

These are my thoughts on this issue. Hopefully, you will understand my concern and dismay on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry O. Sather".

Larry O. Sather

LOS/nlp

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December 28, 1995

Melanie Hauck, Exec. Director
Health & Human Services Committee
Room 10 - Capitol Annex

Dear Melanie: *Melanie*

Just a brief note of appreciation to you for your assistance in working with House Bill 215. The diligent work of your staff member, Lou Crocco, was an important part of the effort to have this legislation passed.

Through all the times of frustration, assistance was always available and I want you to know that it was sincerely appreciated.

Best wishes for a very Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Larry O. Sather
Larry O. Sather

LOS/nlp

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December 28, 1995

The Honorable Roy W. Cornell
Chairman
Health & Human Services Committee
Room 45 - East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Roy:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roy".

Just a brief note to thank you for your assistance in committee and your support on the passage of House Bill 215. This legislation will provide adoptees the opportunity to obtain medical history information that is vital to long term health care.

I also want to let you know that your committee staff, especially Lou Crocco, did an excellent job in assisting me and my office with this legislation. This legislation was important to me, and I admit there were many hours of frustration when I thought it would never see the ultimate end. However, with all the assistance given, it did, and it is personally very gratifying to me.

Once again, thank you for your affirmative vote and for the assistance from the committee staff. It was sincerely appreciated.

Best wishes for a very Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Larry O. Sather".

Larry O. Sather

LOS/nlp

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December 28, 1995

The Honorable Robert C. Jubelirer
President Pro Tempore
Senate of Pennsylvania
Room 292 - Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Senator Jubelirer: *Bob*

I want to express my sincere appreciation to you and your staff for all the assistance and work on House Bill 215. I appreciate the courtesy that was extended to my office and staff.

As you are aware, this legislation was important to me and I admit there were many hours of frustration when I thought it would never see the ultimate end. However, it did and it is personally very gratifying to me.

Once again, thank you for assisting in giving adoptees an opportunity to have information which can be very vital to their long term health care.

Best wishes for a very Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Larry O. Sather
Larry O. Sather

LOS/nlp

House of Representatives



News

FOR RELEASE:

April 1, 1993

Public Information Department
Commonwealth
of Pennsylvania

Rep. Larry O. Sather
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HARRISBURG -- Attempting to further encourage preventive health care, Rep. Larry Sather this week introduced legislation amending the medical history provisions of Pennsylvania's adoption laws.

"With every medical science and technical advance, it is becoming apparent that the more information known about a person's medical history, the better the odds for preventing and treating serious hereditary and genetic health conditions," Sather said.

"Consequently, I have sponsored House Bill 1081 to require that medical history information about the natural parents which may be relevant to any potential hereditary or congenital medical problem be provided by the attending physician or other designated person to the adopting parents or their physician," he said.

The condition need not be in existence or discoverable at the time of adoption. The bill does not affect the confidentiality of the natural parents.

"Adopted children need information about hereditary medical conditions which may not be evident until they reach adulthood. This type of information can be very helpful in preventing or treating future health problems," the Blair and Huntingdon counties lawmaker said.

Sather said the bill has the support of over 22 bipartisan cosponsors.

* * *

*Need 2 copies
Dist. & Aff. 10*

2 COPIES