

**SB 2321 -- Testimony
House Judiciary Committee
Senator Kathy Hogan
March 14, 2023**

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee, for the record my name is Kathy Hogan and I represent District 21 which is central Fargo and a corner of West Fargo.

This bill was introduced as a request from a constituent. She was a mother who had voluntarily given up her baby through the open adoption process. During that process, she assumed that she could have on-going contact with the adoptive parents and her child but that did not happen. During the hearing, we heard concerns about the bill as it was drafted, but we felt that the issue was a serious enough one that we should review current laws and practices to support and protect both birth and adoptive parents.

Many states are now looking at ways to encourage open adoption including providing financial support for home studies. SB 2321 considers the options, risks, and benefits of establishing guidelines for open adoptions. At its most basic, it is

an adoption when the adoptive and birth families share identifying information and have contact with each other during and after the adoption process.

The choice a birth parent makes to place a child is one of the most gut-wrenching decisions they will ever have to make. Studies show that the more open the adoption, the better for the child's wellbeing in the long run. When an adoption is finalized, the adoptive family has full legal responsibility for the baby.

Navigating these complex interpersonal and legal questions is now generating more and more questions that this study would begin to frame.

Everyone interested in this issue felt that this issue needs to be studied and thus this bill is in its current form. Here is a link to significant information on this issue.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/openadoption.pdf>

Thank you for your consideration and I am more than willing to answer any questions.