

With Roe vs Wade being over turned, now is the time more then ever to be bringing adoption to light and the different types of adoptions that can be an option. Not only that but we need to be able to protect all parties involved.

Adoption should be a time of celebration. For some it is a time of deep mourning. Not just because they are mourning the relinquishing of their rights to their baby but because they have discovered they have been coerced into the placement of their baby under false pretenses.

That is exactly what has happened to so many women, and in one article by Kathryn Joyce, talks about a 19-year-old young woman, who found herself with an unplanned pregnancy. She went to a maternity home for the pregnancy and to receive help in the decision of what to do, she decided to do an open adoption. From there the young woman fell into a deep depression after relinquishing her child to the adoptive family, who closed the adoption after initially agreeing that it should be an open adoption. She was never allowed to her to see her son again once placement happened.

I myself having done an adoption in the state of North Dakota, I know personally as a birth mother, the anxiety it provokes knowing that at anytime you could say or do something that could cause the adoptive family to close the adoption and cut off contact at any given time. I was walking on eggshells until my child turned 18. I was a lucky case, for the majority of the adoption it went fairly well, there was a point that things got rocky and I almost lost all contact because I spoke up about wanting what was best for our child.

As of now, there are no laws protecting the child or birth parents in the matter of open adoption in the state of North Dakota or any laws regarding open adoption. This means, you can enter an adoption agreement thinking you have an open adoption with the adoptive family but they have the right to close it for any reason at any time. With no ramifications. Even if it is not in the best interest of the child, even if it will do more harm to the child to close the adoption.

Studies have shown that open adoptions improve the adopted child's mental health and wellbeing as they age. The more open the adoption is, the better the outcomes for the child. According to the articles, "Review of Benefits and Risks for Children in Open Adoption Arrangements", and "Patterns and predictors of adoption openness and contact: 14 years postadoption"

Not only will this bill help children's mental health in the long run but it will benefit North Dakota in the as well with lowering the needs for mental health services for adoptees.