

September 19, 2003

Coalition for Open Adoption Records
Dr. Michael Grand, Wendy Rowney, and Karen Lynn,
Coordinating Committee

Dear COAR Coordinating Committee:

Thank you very much for your questions regarding the NDP's policies regarding opening up adoption records. I am responding on behalf of all NDP candidates regarding this very important issue.

1. What (if any) is your personal connection with adoption?

Comments:

Our candidates are from a variety of backgrounds, many of whom undoubtedly have experience either as adoptees, adopting parents, or who know someone who has been one of those. NDP MPP Marilyn Churley, a birth parent who was re-united with her son in 1996, has campaigned tirelessly for opening up adoption records.

2. Opening Records for Adult Adoptees

I would support legislation that:

- gave adult adoptees access to their own record of birth, but allowed the birth parents to file a contact veto (forbidding the adoptee to contact the birth parents)

Comments:

NDP MPP Marilyn Churley's Adoption Disclosure Statute Law Amendment Act would change Ontario's laws to:

- Provide access to birth registration and adoption records for adult adoptees, provide
- Provide access to birth registration and adoption records for birth parents
- Implement a contact veto, through which the birth parent and adoptee can register not to be contacted personally

- Amend the Child and Family Services Act to provide, upon request, counseling for adopted persons, birth parents and others who may be affected by disclosure of adoption information

3. Opening Records for Birth Parents of Adult Adoptees

I would support legislation that:

- gave birth parents access to the amended birth certificate, but allowed the adult adoptee to file a contact veto (forbidding the birth parents to contact the adoptee)

Comments:

As above.

4. Any Additional Comments:

The NDP's practical solutions for public health care includes a commitment to save lives by improving access to records for adoptees and birth parents.

Recent research on genetic diseases clearly shows that keeping adoptees in the dark about their medical history actually sentences many of them to premature deaths.

Howard Hampton and the NDP would move quickly to pass Bill 77, a law developed and championed by Toronto-Danforth MPP Marilyn Churley. Bill 77 would improve access to records for adoptees and birth parents. This much-needed adoption disclosure would save lives by giving adult adoptees access to their own adoption records and family medical history. Currently, the more than 300,000 adoptees in Ontario receive no benefit from government screening programs for detection of life-threatening diseases. Bill 77 has received first and second reading in the Legislature and committee hearings have been held. However, the Conservatives and Liberals have blocked final passage of the Bill.

publicpower means ensuring adoptees and birth parents can access critical birth records to save lives.

Please visit our web site, www.publicpower.ca, to view our entire election platform, publicpower: Practical Solutions for Ontario.

Sincerely,



Howard Hampton, Leader
Ontario NDP