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April 3, 2013

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Members of the Committee
Oregon State Senate Judiciary Committee

re: Senate Bill 623 – Adoption Records

Dear Chairman Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

I write to solicit your prompt and favorable consideration of Senate Bill 623-1. Since 1975, I have been in private law practice in Sweet Home and have appeared in courts in all but a handful of Oregon's counties in hundreds of adoption cases. I represent licensed adoption agencies, prospective adoptive parents, birth parents, putative fathers, children and extended family members in adoption-related matters. I am a member and vice-chair of the Oregon State Bar Family Law Section's Standing Committee on Adoption Law.

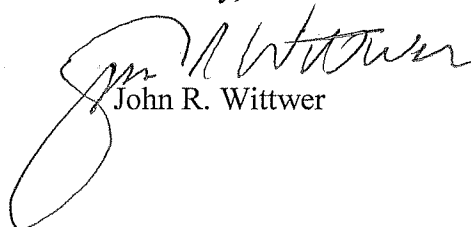
I was privileged to be a member of the Oregon Law Commission's Adoption Records Work Group which produced this bill by broad consensus, but I provide this statement in my individual capacity. I respectfully ask that you include this statement in the record of proceedings on Senate Bill 623.

I commend the Adoption Records Work Group Report on SB 623 to you as an excellent detailed guide to the bill. By the time you read this statement, I trust you will have a general familiarity with the bill's principal terms. Without minimizing the significance of other issues SB 623 addresses, I believe the following points justify your support of the bill:

- 1. The bill identifies those whose entitlement to access to sealed adoption court records cannot rationally be disputed, eliminates unneeded barriers to that access and specifies and segregates information in sealed adoption court records for which heightened confidentiality safeguards should be maintained.**
- 2. For the first time the bill gives an adult who was adopted in Oregon as a child access without court order to selected portions of the adult's sealed adoption court records.**

I anticipate attending the Committee's April 4th work session on SB 623 and will be available to respond to questions relative to this brief statement or to offer further testimony about the bill. Thank you for your consideration in this important matter.

Sincerely,



John R. Wittwer