

To the Senate Inquiry into the Past & Present Practices of Donor Conception in Australia,

As a donor conceived person born in the USA in the early 1970's, I feel that all donor conceived people should have access to information about their donor no matter where or when they were born.

In support of this idea, I would like to relate a bit of information about my own situation.

I was so glad to hear that donor-conceived people in Australia may have the opportunity to gain the official right to have information on their donor. I am involved in several international on-line DC support groups, so I have been watching similar developments in other countries as well, and can only hope that the USA will soon follow suit in gaining momentum to grant such access.

For me, there are several reasons why having such information is important:

- As a parent now myself, I have gained a greater understanding of the importance of genetics on a social and self-identity level. You can't be a parent and walk around a store without someone making comments like "She has your nose" or "She doesn't look at all like her dad – where did that blonde hair come from?" or "How did he get so tall?" I can only imagine what heartache such comments must have caused my parents over the years. Secrecy is not a good thing.
- As my parents age and have started to have health problems, I have wondered more about my family medical history - do my kids really have an increased risk of developing colon cancer, which my mom, my dad ("social" dad), and my paternal grandmother all had? Back when I was conceived I have been told that they sometimes mixed the donor sperm with the husband's sperm, so I don't even have any certainty that I am *not* my father's daughter. To the end of at least clearing up this ambiguity, I have requested my mother's records from the fertility clinic where I was conceived, but have been getting a run-around for the last few months. For me, having access to donor medical history information would be the difference between needing to have an annual colonoscopy "just in case" for the rest of my life (I am now in my mid-30's) . . . or not.
- Although I did not grow up here, I now live in the same city where I was conceived. In fact, there are now several doctors that live in my neighborhood who work at that particular medical center where the fertility clinic is. Is there some chance I might be related to one of them? What about to one of *my* friends whose dad attended that same medical school in the early '70s? I have absolutely no idea who my half-siblings are. What are the chances that one of my kids will end up dating a close cousin? The chances may be slim, but the thought is disconcerting indeed.

In support of my fellow Donor Conceived people in Australia, I ask that the Committee recommends that the Federal Government enacts legislation to give all Australian Donor Conceived People the right to have access to all available information on their donors.

Regards,

USA