

For Immediate Release
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**ONTARIO DELIVERS ON ITS COMMITMENT
TO IMPLEMENT NEW ADOPTION INFORMATION LAWS**
Implementation Of Legislation Will Help Protect Privacy

TORONTO – Ontario is fulfilling its commitment to deliver a new, more open adoption information disclosure system that will allow easier access to information in adoption records and provide new privacy protections for people who do not want to be contacted, Minister of Community and Social Services Madeleine Meilleur announced today.

“We are making it easier for thousands of adoptees and birth parents to learn about their medical and personal histories while establishing stronger privacy safeguards than currently exist,” said Meilleur. “We recognize that the right to information is not the same as the right to a relationship.”

The Ontario government has begun implementing Bill 183, the Adoption Information Disclosure Act, 2005. Adult adoptees and birth parents whose adoptions were finalized in Ontario can now:

- Register a “no contact” notice with the Ontario Registrar General (ORG) if they do not want to be contacted.
- Register with the ORG a notice specifying a “contact preference” on how they prefer to be contacted.
- Apply to the Child and Family Services Review Board to prevent disclosure of identifying information if there are concerns regarding sexual harm or significant physical/emotional harm.

Adult adoptees will also be able to register a “waiver of protection” that will allow the Ontario Registrar General to release information to a birth parent even though the adopted person may have been a victim of abuse by the birth parent.

The legislation is expected to be fully implemented in the fall of 2007. The Province is currently putting the necessary procedures in place to process requests for information contained in adoption orders and original birth records. The government will also be conducting an advertising campaign in the coming weeks across Ontario, Canada and the United States to inform adoptees and birth parents about their new information and privacy rights.

“This act will have a profound impact on thousands of people who have been longing for years, often decades, to know their roots or the names of their children,” said Dr. Michael Grand from the Coalition for Open Adoption Records. “Finally, as adults, we can make private, responsible decisions regarding contact.”

This is the latest example of how the McGuinty government is working to strengthen Ontario by strengthening Ontario's families. Other initiatives include:

- Providing more children and youth with mental health services through more than 200 new and expanded local programs across the province resulting from increased investments of \$38 million annually.
- Creating and sustaining almost 15,000 new child care spaces, as part of our Best Start plan for healthy early development, learning and child care.
- Helping single-parent families by increasing their assistance. The social assistance rate increases, along with the NCBS flow-through, will mean that single parents with two children are receiving \$1,620 more than they would have in 2003-04 – a 15.7 per cent increase.

“We’re moving Ontario’s adoption information laws into the 21st century,” said Meilleur. “Adoptees and birth parents are finally getting the same rights as all citizens, the right to know their identity and the right to know their past.”

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For information on applications for “no contact” notices, “contact preferences” and “waivers of protection” visit: www.serviceontario.ca.

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