

**UPDATED SUMMARY
HOUSE BILL 15-1355**

First Regular Session - Seventieth Colorado General Assembly

This summary applies to the reengrossed version of this bill as introduced in the second house. It does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. This summary reflects only the main points of the legislation.

The bill creates the "Heritage Act" and includes a legislative declaration about the importance of knowing one's familial heritage and origins.

Upon proof of evidence of at least one common birth parent between an adult adoptee and a sibling or half-sibling, an adult adoptee is an eligible party for purposes of obtaining direct access to a noncertified copy of the unaltered original birth certificate and the amended birth certificate of an adult sibling or half-sibling who was born, relinquished, or adopted in the state of Colorado, subject to the existing statutory requirement that all siblings adopted in a sibling group must reach the age of 18 before the birth certificates can be released. The bill also allows a descendant of the adult adoptee or a legal representative of the adult adoptee or descendant to access the original birth certificate and amended birth certificate of the adult sibling or half-sibling of the adult adoptee.

The bill grants direct access to certain unredacted personal records pertaining to a person who as a minor child was in the custody of the state home for dependent and neglected children (former ward), regardless of the former ward's adoption status. The bill also grants direct access to certain unredacted personal records of the former ward to the former ward's spouse, siblings, or descendants, or legal representative if the individual requesting access has the notarized written consent of the former ward or if the former ward is deceased. The bill defines the types of personal records relating to the custody, relinquishment, or adoption of a former ward that may be accessed, without redaction; except that personal records shall not include prerelinquishment counseling records, which shall remain confidential.

The records that are accessible under this bill are records held by a court, a state agency, or the legal representative of a court or state agency and the "custodian of records" does not include a licensed child placement agency.