

FROM THE DESK OF

Dr. Alissa Beuerlein

July 3, 2024

Dear Task Force,

My name is Alissa Beuerlein, and I am a donor conceived person as well as a doctorate level clinical mental health counselor.

I am writing in support of 2024 updated Article 9.

As a donor conceived person I have gone to great lengths to know my heritage as well as the people I am related to. I have submitted my personal DNA to five different commercial DNA websites. I've had the assistance of two "DNA angels." I also hired a company that specializes in using DNA to find biological relatives, a service I paid thousands of dollars for.

This search has led neither to close relatives (none closer than 4th+ cousins) nor to any identifying information of my parents' sperm donor or any of my paternal biological siblings. I remain active on all of these commercial DNA websites today, just as I have for the last seven years.

I have searched for my parents' donor not only to satisfy genealogical bewilderment needs, but also to find answers to ongoing health conditions that have continuously baffled doctors. It took me three years of daily pain to learn that I have a genetic condition that could only have come from my paternal side. This disorder carries with it possibilities of other serious genetic comorbidities.

All donor conceived people should have a legal right to genetic information about themselves. This information cannot always be found on a DNA site, as my story has continued to prove. Having to go through with using commercial DNA websites is an added burden placed on donor conceived people that we did not agree to in the first place.

As a mental health counselor of 15 years, I have also worked with donor conceived people clinically. When donor conceived people don't know who their biological parent is, it often leads to feelings of grief, sadness, anger, and a loss of identity. I have witnessed this in my clinical practice. The ability to know who, and as a byproduct,

where, donor conceived people come from would mitigate some of the trauma that can come from being donor conceived, particularly the lack of knowing parentage.

Upon reading the position statement of Carol E. Lockwood, I was disappointed to see outdated and dehumanizing terms that have proven to be harmful to the donor conceived community within this statement. Using the term “anonymous donor-conceived children” fails to acknowledge our community as both known entities and as people who are not only children, but also grow into adults. Using “it” to refer to those of us who are donor conceived rather than a humanizing pronoun, was among the most concerning phrases. These types of phrases insinuate that we, donor conceived people are somehow products bought, designed and owned by our parents, rather than thinking and feeling individuals with our own opinions on the matter of our conception and rights to information regarding our heritage.

In summary, for both personal and professional reasons, I support Article 9 and I appreciate the task force for your time.

Sincerely,

Alissa Beuerlein, Ph.D., LPC-MHSP