

04/23/2022

Anna Greenblatt  
237 N. Marias Ave  
Clawson, MI 48017

The Honorable Rodney Wakeman  
S-1089 House Office Building  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Wakeman:

An amendment to the Foster Care and Adoption Services Act is pending in the Committee on Families, Children, and Seniors. The Michigan House of Representatives introduced House Bill 5978 on March 24, 2022. This bill was introduced by Representatives Wakeman, Green, Whiteford, Brann, Kahle, Brenda Carter, Young, Pohutsky, Tyrone Carter, O'Malley, and Anthony. As a child welfare employee and staunch advocate for maintaining family bonds, I am concerned that the legislation has not yet moved forward in the House and Senate. This bill would require that the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services along with the contractual private agencies under the scope of the Department, help foster children who are separated from their family to connect to family and friends who may assist in the foster youth's care.

Children in foster care deserve the opportunity to be placed, when appropriate, in a relative or fictive kin home. Placing children in homes with relatives or kinship caregivers is highly beneficial for maintaining the child's cultural and religious values. These placements also tend to be more stable for children placed in the home as they allow the child to maintain family connections with extended family. Passing this amendment would allow for children in foster care to be able to maintain important bonds with their family and friends.

Please do whatever is in your power to move this bill forward and allow foster children to maintain crucial relationships with their family and friends that may assist in their care. Connecticut and Louisiana currently have the same requirement for child placing agencies and it is time for Michigan to follow suit.

As Chairperson of the Committee on Families, Children, and Seniors, I urge your support for this amendment of the Foster Care and Adoption Services Act and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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