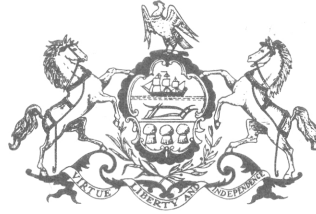


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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

February 13, 2003

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Proposed Legislation – Foster Parent Consideration Act (Prior HB 210)

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Larry O. Sather

In the near future, I intend to reintroduce legislation that would establish the Foster Parent Consideration Act. This proposal would provide for **consideration** (not first preference) of foster parents when interested in adopting their foster children by ensuring an interview with the foster family care agency. Information gathered from the interview, along with the results of interviews of other prospective adoptive resources, would then be presented to the appropriate county children and youth agency for review when making its final determination on an adoptive family.

This legislation was drafted in response to the concerns of foster parents who feel that they are not given fair or reasonable consideration when adoption of their foster child becomes the goal. These individuals are generous and caring, and often seek to make their foster child a permanent part of their lives.

This measure goes further, however, by taking into account numerous significant aspects that should be paramount when seeking an adoptive resource for foster children, such as the importance of relatives (kin) to care for the children, if available, and the preservation of entire sibling groups in permanent placement. Furthermore, the legislation encourages, as best practice, communication between all parties that have a vested interest in the well being of the child.

According to the Pennsylvania State Foster Parent Association, in 2002, 64% of foster children were adopted by their foster caregiver, a statistic that clearly indicates that foster parents **are** being utilized as an effective adoptive resource when appropriate. This bill, however, basically reinforces this approach through statute and makes caseworkers more cognizant of the availability of foster parents for permanent placement.

Although some foster parents may not be selected to become the adoptive resource, even if it is their desire to permanently care for the child, this proposal seeks to emphasize the significance of foster parents as part of the child's transition team and their important role in the lives of children throughout the Commonwealth.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Jennifer in my office at 787-3335 or by e-mail at jhaines@pahousegop.com.

LOS/jrh

PREVIOUS CO-SPONSORS: ZIMMERMAN, SCHULER, T. ARMSTRONG, M. BAKER, BARRAR, BASTIAN, BELFANTI, BENNINGHOFF, CAPPABIANCA, CAPPELLI, L. I. COHEN, DAILEY, DeWEESE, EGOLF, FORCIER, GEIST, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, JOSEPHS, KAISER, R. MILLER, S. MILLER, NICKOL, PHILLIPS, PISTELLA, ROHRER, SCHRODER, SCRIMENTI, SHANER, SOLOBAY, STERN, E. Z. TAYLOR, TIGUE, WASHINGTON, C. WILLIAMS, WILT, BROWNE, MCGILL, YOUNGBLOOD, STEELMAN, HORSEY and TRELLO.

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 Rep. Miller 197
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House of Representatives

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 12, 2003

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Brian Preski, Chief of Staff
The Speaker's Office
Room 139 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Brian:

House Bill 434, of which I am the prime sponsor, was reported from the House Children and Youth Committee on April 30, 2003.

HB 434 establishes a freestanding act, known as the Foster Parent Consideration Act. Under the legislation, county children and youth agencies are required to provide consideration to foster parents, who are interested in adopting their foster child (children), by way of an interview with the foster family care agency.

I am respectfully requesting that HB 434 be placed on the calendar for consideration by the full House.

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration to this request. Should there be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry O. Sather".

Larry O. Sather

LOS/jrh