

Nathaniel Wildes  
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Committee on the Health and Human Services,

I write in support of the amendment to LD 1409, An Act Regarding the Rights of Foster Parents.

As foster parents, my wife and I raised two infants for nearly 3 years, through multiple failed reunifications. During a 21 month consecutive placement, DHHS was “forced” to consider placing the children with biological family multiple states away, with whom the children had only spent very brief time with.

To the children, the place and people they spent the vast majority of their lives with were whom they emotionally bonded with as parents and family. Transitioning the children out of that stable, loving home in favor of a biological family who may or may not provide suitable long-term care, flies in the face of the best interest of the children.

This is not to say that biological family are automatically a lesser choice after one year. In some scenarios, this may be the case. However, DHHS should be required to consider the loving stability of a successful foster family when evaluating a placement change.

Being a child in foster care is extremely traumatic, they are faced with removal from all they know, visits or attempted visits with biological parents who have harmed them, transitions between caregivers, and so much more. The State of Maine does not need to inflict further harm on children in foster care by removing them from secure, loving and long term placements that have become the children’s home and family because someone with shared lineage with the child/children decides they are ready to be involved. It is another betrayal of the children, it’s another infliction of avoidable, unnecessary trauma.

Thank you for the consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nate Wildes', written in a cursive style.

Nate Wildes