



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony In Support Of:

### **LD 1409, “An Act Regarding the Rights of Foster Parents”** *The Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Abigail Griffin and I present District #34, which is the towns of Glenburn, Levant and Kenduskeag. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce **LD 1409, “An Act Regarding the Rights of Foster Parents.”**

This bill makes a simple but meaningful change: it requires the Department of Health and Human Services to treat long-term foster parents—those who have had a child placed in their home continuously for a year or more—the same as adult relatives when making decisions about that child’s placement or permanency.

This is about recognizing the bonds that form through time, care, and stability. A year in the life of a child—especially a child in foster care—is a long time. During that year, a foster parent may become the primary caregiver, advocate, and emotional anchor for that child. Yet under current law, their voice does not carry the same weight as that of a relative, even one with little to no established relationship.

This bill does not override family reunification efforts or terminate parental rights. It simply ensures that when permanency decisions are made, foster parents who have provided a safe and stable home for over a year are not treated as strangers in the process.

We know that stability is critical to a child’s development and well-being. This bill ensures that our system acknowledges and values the relationships that foster parents and children build—relationships that, for many kids, become family in every sense of the word.

I respectfully urge the committee to support this bill and to help us better protect the best interests of children in Maine’s foster care system.

Thank you, and I’m happy to answer any questions.

Abigail Griffin  
State Representative

District 34 Glenburn, Kenduskeag & Levant