



Christian Civic League of Maine

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Maine Legislative Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Mike McClellan, Policy Director for the Christian Civic League of Maine. The Christian Civic League of Maine envisions a state and nation where God is honored, religious freedom flourishes, families thrive, and life is cherished. We believe a Biblical approach works in life and including in governance.

Please accept this as our testimony in favor of LD 503, Resolve, To Help Children in Foster Care Move Toward Adoption, sponsored by Representative Kinney. We live in a complex world, with complex issues. How often in recent years have people in this body, people testifying before it found themselves being far apart in goals and methods of solving societal problems? Today, you are presented with the rare win-win scenario. An idea and concept that is right (for all) on so many levels.

This bill seeks to have Maine better support families who take on that most important role of becoming a permanent adoptive family. This resolve directs the Department of Health and Human Services to require that an adoptive family receive the same level of financial assistance for long-term or limited period adoption assistance as the family received when the child was in treatment-level foster care.

In researching this issue, I learned many things: in 2018, there were 4,058 adoptions in the United States, there are around 437,000 children in the United States who are in foster care on any given day, of the children who exited foster care in 2018; 25% were taken in by a family that went through the adoption process. Visiting www.maine.gov suddenly makes the issue real. It is one thing to think big picture and think numbers, it is quite another to see real faces of real kids who want to be in a real family: <https://adoptuskids.org/states/me/browse.aspx?pg=1>

Research also shows that barriers to adoption are led by the waiting time to adopt and the cost. One recent estimate of cost per year ranges from \$30,000-\$45,000 to the family. Apparently, there are possible grants. There also are income requirements to adopt but they are not stringent, clearly, a family adopting must want to add the child. Should the cost be a barrier?

To close, raising a child is an important piece of a successful culture. Conversely, neglected children could face a lifetime of relying on society, possibly a costly proposition. This bill challenges Maine (us) to support adoption, adoption families and the entire process. It offers us a more efficient option of supporting a young child so that we do not later find ourselves forced to support an adult who cannot support themselves. It is a stark and easy choice. Please support Rep. Kinney's bill LD 503; Resolve, To Help Children in Foster Care Move Toward Adoption. Thank you!

