

**Testimony**  
**House Bill No. 1457**  
**House Human Services Committee**  
**Representative Weisz, Chairman**  
**January 23, 2023**

Chairman Weisz, and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Cory Pedersen, Director of the Children and Family Services Section with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department). I appear before you in opposition to House Bill 1457 and ask the committee to give it a do not pass recommendation.

Federal regulations under Title 42 U.S.C. § 671(a)(19) require each child in foster care to achieve one of the five approved permanency goals: reunification with parents, guardianship, placement with a fit/willing relative, another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) or adoption.

Federal law requires states to consider relatives of the child for placement preference. Foster parents may be considered for a more long-term permanency option, but are not guaranteed, to be a permanent placement option for a foster child.

In summary, foster care is intended to be temporary and if adoption is the selected permanency plan diligent effort must be made by the custodian to rule out relatives before "considering" the licensed foster care provider as the adoption option. There are many other barriers that delay permanency for children and Children and Family Services Section is committed to continuing to look for areas we can improve the process and streamline items to be more efficient for our providers while balancing what is best for the children and their families we serve.

This concludes my testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.