



# North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL  
600 EAST BOULEVARD  
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



## **Representative Brandon Prichard**

District 8  
8600 Creekside Drive  
Bismarck, ND 58504-3952

C: 701-220-0624

[bprichard@ndlegis.gov](mailto:bprichard@ndlegis.gov)

## **COMMITTEES:**

Human Services  
Agriculture

### **House Bill 1457 Senate Health and Human Services Committee Senator Lee, Chairman March 20, 2023**

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Rep. Brandon Prichard and I represent District 8 which covers all of Emmons County, rural and suburban portions of Burleigh County, and Wilton which is in McLean County. I am here to testify in support HB 1457 which would give preference to foster families in the adoption process if the family has raised the child from infancy, cared for the child for over six months, or if the intent from the foster parents was to adopt the child from the beginning of the foster process. HB 1457 would make adopting a child easier and more equitable for foster families. Notably, there is an exception for ICWA which federally mandates that a Native American child be prioritized to Native American families. A diligent search for existing family members is required by federal law and is included in the language of HB 1457.

Currently, families who entered the adoption pool without a connection may get preferential treatment. HB 1457 would reorder the process by giving the preferential treatment to the family which has raised the child or cared for them for over six months, from infancy, or with the intent of adoption. After revamping the bill several times with legislative council, the version in front of you is within the framework of federal adoption and foster care law. It should have no conflict. Several other states such as Oregon have had this provision in their code for decades. We need to realize that family stems from emotional connections within a shared household. It can be heart-wrenching for a foster family to watch the child they raised be stripped away from them because they were not first in line in the adoption process.

I encourage the Senate Health and Human Service Committee to support foster families who want to adopt children in their care. I respectfully ask for the committee to support HB 1457 by giving the bill a "Do Pass" recommendation.