

HB 1534

Human Service Committee Members of the Senate,

I write this brief letter in **support** of HB 1534. When researching through the guidelines of our state along with others it seems as though there are 2 pathways in North Dakota to provide children a safe home within foster care.

1. Foster Care- Temporary Placement
2. Adoption – Permanent Placement

The two pathways of finding homes for children in North Dakota do not align & communicate with one another yet both fall within the jurisdiction of North Dakota Health & Human Services. All children who are in foster care enter with the intent of a temporary placement however transition occurs through the legal process of needing temporary care to needing permanent care.

This bill does not replace the need for private agencies connecting people who desire to experience the adoption process outside of foster care but instead creates an opportunity for foster parents to continue to love a child through adoption without needing to complete the same paperwork, the same home study, the same finger prints, for the same state agency that they have already been working with through their minimum 6 month foster care placement.

I understand the goal of foster care is reunification. In reality there are children who will not reunify with their birth parents or relatives and are in need of a safe place to call home forever. If there are foster parents that are currently already taking care of these children, why must they go through the same process to now adopt?

I have provide 3 links to check out how other states have combined these two pathways compared to how our system looks. These states are already providing an opportunity for those who may adopt through foster care.

North Dakota - <https://www.adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/how-to-adopt-and-foster/state-information/north-dakota>

Washington - <https://www.adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/how-to-adopt-and-foster/state-information/washington>

Georgia - <https://www.adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/how-to-adopt-and-foster/state-information/georgia>

I urge DO PASS recommendation from the committee and a green vote on the floor!

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