



NORTH DAKOTA

Family Alliance LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Testimony Opposing House Bill 1556

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Good morning, Chairman Ruby and honorable members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Jacob Thomsen, and I am a Policy Analyst with North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action. I am testifying on behalf of our organization in opposition to House Bill 1556 and respectfully request that you render a “DO NOT PASS” on this bill.

Our organization believes that orphaned children are some of our most vulnerable citizens in North Dakota. When they finally become adopted, and are brought into a family, it is a beautiful thing. These children have an opportunity to experience familial love in a way that they hadn’t experienced before.

In North Dakota, the relinquishment of parental rights generally comes out of situations where it is in the best interest of the child to be separated from the parents. This bill flips that on its head and says that a parent may relinquish parental rights of an adopted child for a situation that is *not* in the best interest of the child, but in the best interest of the adoptive family.

Now, I am not yet a parent. I hope that God will give me the opportunity to be one in the future, but I cannot imagine a situation where I would want to give my child to the state because of the reasons outlined in this bill. I would want to do anything I possibly could to help my child, whether adopted or biological. There are reasonable steps to take to address every one of these problems, and none of those reasonable steps involve giving the child back to the state.

Adopted children are not to be treated as less than biological children, which is what this bill does. Any good parent would say, regardless of whether it’s a good day or a bad day, they still have a moral imperative to take care of their child.

This bill says that when the going gets tough, you can just give the child back. Our organization does not believe that these children are like faulty products from a store that you can simply return. Children are full of dignity, worthy of love, and have an incredible amount of potential. They have a biological and fundamental need to belong to a family.

This bill says that some children are beyond help, and when adopted children specifically exhibit these things, they can be returned. For these reasons, North Dakota Family Alliance Legislative Action respectfully requests that you render a “DO NOT PASS” on House Bill 1556. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify, I will stand for any questions.

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