

Hello, my name is Cody Gorentz. I am a 17 year old who was adopted and I am in support of SB1534.

My biological half sister, Tasha (look at her), took me in at 8 years old.

My birth parents didn't know anything about what it took to be responsible for a child. Everyday was a guessing game, wondering if I was even going to be able to eat that day or not. Sometimes they would send me up to mcdonalds with a couple bucks. I would ride my bike the few miles there and back all by myself as a young kid.

They were both drug addicts and didn't make any effort to hide it from me.

My parents would intentionally keep me home from school, causing me to miss about 70 days per school year which made me fall really behind. I moved in with my sister in the middle of 4th grade. Last year, my sophomore year of highschool was the very first time I reached actually being at my grade level in all of my classes. That is how behind I was.

Leaving my parents and moving in with my sister wasn't an easy transition. I loved my parents and as a kid, it is not always easy to understand that your needs are not being met, but I know it was the best thing to happen to me.

I knew I was in a safe, loving place but I struggle a lot. I was happy to be with my sister but I never knew how long I would be there or if I was going to have to go live with my parents again. I had a lot of anxiety over not knowing what the future would hold. I was so afraid. I never wanted to be in a room by myself. If my sister got up and walked into another room, I would follow her. I didn't want to sleep alone. I even struggled with going into the bathroom for very long to shower knowing my sister was a few rooms away. It scared me not having her right next to me because I worried that my parents would come and try to take me away. My anxiety was through the roof. I started working with my therapist to try and control my anxiety but not knowing what the future held was overwhelming.

I decided to write letters to my birth parents asking them to terminate their rights so my sister could adopt me. They agreed but it still took a really long time for my adoption day to actually happen. The whole process was spread out over a very scary and stressful three years.

I would like for other kids who go through the same type of situation as me to reach permanency faster than I did. I think they would be able to avoid a lot of anxiety over the uncertainty of what might happen if the process for foster to adopt is simplified.

Kids who are better off not going back to their birth parents deserve permanency with a loving family as soon as parental rights are terminated.

I am asking for your support on this bill so that kids like me can feel safe and loved sooner.