



Catholic Charities

of Southwest Kansas

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SB 401

From: Deborah J Snapp, LBSW

In Support

To: Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

My name is Deborah J Snapp. I am the Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas in Dodge City. We are a licensed Child Placing Agency through the Kansas Department of Children and Families. We have been placing children for adoption since 1965. We have placed nearly 600 children from state custody who have been abused and neglected and we have placed infants in private agency adoptions. I personally have been involved in the practice of adoption for more than 25 years.

Our years of adoption practice has taught us that, whenever possible, the birth families should select the adoptive family they want to raise their child. Every parent whether they are raising their child or not, has hopes and dreams for that child. We have found that the most successful adoptions are those where families share values and ideals.

For over 30 years, we have encouraged birth parents to select the adoptive families for their children. In that time, we have never had a birth parent ask to place with a single parent. Birth parents share with us the kind of mother and father they want for their child. Most of the birth parents we work with in placement are either looking for a family like the family they grew up with or the family they wish they belong to. They talk about having siblings in their child's life and the kind of activities the family is involved in. Some birth parents ask to place with a specific religious denomination,



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but most find comfort in the family's involvement with the religious faith practiced by the adoptive couple.

Currently, the adoption practice of Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas is focused on the placement of infants in voluntary relinquishments. Adoption services are funded through fees and donations. We receive no state funds for our adoption program. Our professional obligation is to prepare and assess families for adoption who would be families that our birth parents would want to place with. Essentially, we have two sets of parents who share the same dreams and one child who stands the best chance in life as the child grows to realize that both sets of parents wanted the same thing for that child.

While we are focused on the type of adoption that we strongly believe is in the best interests of both sets of parents, their families and the adoptive child, we recognize that some parents have lifestyles and values that are different from most of the clients we serve. Nothing in the bill prevents persons with different values from pursuing adoption with other practitioners.

We believe that a licensed child placing agency should be free to exercise its professional judgement in the creation of new families from the client base that comes to the agency. We do not suggest that every set of parents or adoption practitioner should adopt the values of our clients, but we do suggest that families should be free to pursue their own values, homes and dreams and that our agency should have the freedom to assist them in that manner that they all believe is best for the child.

We support SB 401 as a matter of freedom to practice professional judgment on behalf of our clients and as a matter of freedom for birth parents and adoptive families to create; the life that they believe is the very best home for that child.