



Christian Family Services

"Helping Children and Families Find a Better Life"

8249 West 95th Street, Suite 107, Overland Park, KS 66212

*Serving Children & Families
for over 30 years*

March 14, 2018

Re: Senate Bill No. 401

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in support of Senate Bill 401 and the creation of the Adoption Protection Act. Christian Family Services of the Midwest, Inc. has been a licensed child placing agency in the state of Kansas since 1982. In that capacity, we provide free counseling to expectant parents, ongoing support both prior to and after an adoption plan has been made for as long as requested or needed, domestic adoption services, home studies for families doing private adoptions and Hague accredited home studies and post placement services for families doing international adoptions.

Many of the expectant parents that we work with choose our agency specifically because they are looking for Christian families to adopt their children. We want to continue to be a resource for them. Many of the adoptive families that we work with want to work with a Christian agency where they know they and the birthparents will be treated ethically, and with dignity and respect.

Under Kansas adoption law, private agencies are allowed to determine what eligibility requirements they deem important and essential in the adoptive parents whom they approve for adoption. We believe it is critically important that the right to decide those criteria remain with each private agency and their Board of Directors. As a private agency, no one is forced to work with us, and in fact they have many options to choose from. We believe it is important that individuals and families should continue to have a choice in who they work with, including agencies with faith-based convictions.

In reality, if our agency was forced to decide between ceasing to provide services and following our sincerely held religious beliefs, our Board of Directors would choose the latter out of conviction. If we were threatened with a legal challenge, we would likely have to cease operations as we are a small, non-profit agency, without the resources to mount an expensive legal defense. We receive no state funding but instead are funded by fees for service, donations and fund-raising activities.

We strongly support SB 401 because it will ensure a diverse range of child placement providers and stabilize Kansas' relationship with faith-based agencies in the years to come. We ask for your support as well.

Sincerely,

Susan K. Timmons, LSCSW
Director of Child Placement
Agency employee for 36 years