

Youth, Rights & Justice

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

From the Desk of
Representative
Jennifer Williamson

Vote “Yes” on SB 741-A to Promote the Best Interests of Children in Long-term Foster Care and in the Adoption Process

SB 741-A is supported by advocates and care providers for children, including **Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)**, attorneys for children and parents, foster parents and the Oregon Permanency Coalition.

The purpose of SB 741-A is to support the best interests of foster children when decisions are made regarding long term placement and adoption. Specifically, Senate Bill 741-A will:

- Require DHS to amend its adoption selection rule to allow consideration of both relatives and long-term foster parents who are interested in adopting a child. DHS should consider all good options and choose the best when selecting a “forever home” for a child. (The current DHS rule has meant that distant relatives with no emotional relationship to a child have been selected to adopt children in cases when a long-term foster parent wasn’t even considered.)
- Require DHS to make a report to the court if DHS moves or plans to move a child from a long-term foster home to another foster home. (Based upon feedback from DHS, exceptions were added to limit the reporting requirement in some instances.)
- Add the authority to order placement with a foster parent who is or has cared for a child for 12 months or longer. The juvenile court has long had the authority to order a type of placement when it is in the best interests of the child. In 2007, the types of placements were expanded to add relatives and other foster placements; SB 741-A expands options for the juvenile court to consider when acting in the best interest of the child.

What SB 741-A **does not** and **cannot** do:

- SB 741-A does not prevent DHS from selecting grandparents, aunts and uncles, or other relatives, as foster or adoptive parents. SB 741-A *is consistent* with previous legislation requiring DHS to make “diligent efforts” to place children in foster care with relatives.
- SB 741-A does *not* interfere with placement preferences under the Indian Child Welfare Act or other federal laws.
- SB 741-A does *not* prevent DHS from responding appropriately to allegations of abuse and neglect or from acting to protect children.
- SB 741-A does *not* make foster parents legal parties to the juvenile court case or provide them an opportunity to disrupt or interfere with the court process.

Please vote “Yes” on SB 741-A.

An independent, not-for-profit law firm, Est. 1975

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