

**Passed Unanimously out of House Judiciary Committee**

## Reuniting Families and Preventing Children from Aging out of Foster Care

### What does HB 4009A do?

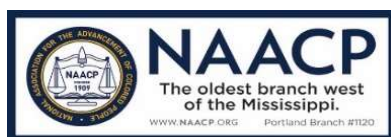
- HB 4009A creates a court process for a child or DHS to reunify a child with a parent whose rights have been terminated when the parent has made significant positive changes in their life and the juvenile court finds that it is in the child’s best interest.
- HB 4009A has many safeguards to protect children and does not allow anyone to disrupt an existing, filed, or otherwise pending adoption.
- This bill will help reunify families of children who would otherwise age out of the foster care system without a legal parent.

### Why is HB 4009A Necessary?

- Currently, the juvenile court may not return a child to her parent after that parent’s rights have been terminated—even if the child has not been adopted and the parent has made significant positive changes that make them a safe parent.
- More than 1,700 children in Oregon are waiting to be adopted.
- 16 other states, including Washington, Colorado, and California, have similar laws.
- The Oregon Court of Appeals has suggested that a legislative fix is necessary to allow families to reunite when it is in a child’s best interests.<sup>1</sup>
- Children of color and those with disabilities are more likely to age out of foster care without a permanent family.<sup>2</sup>

Sponsored by Rep. Sanchez

**Supported by the following partners**



<sup>1</sup> Dept. of Human Services v. K.W., 273 Or App 611 (2015).

<sup>2</sup> Post & Zimmerman, *The Revolving Doors of Family Court: Confronting Broken Adoptions*, 2012.

2/16/2018