

Proponent Testimony for House Committee on Children and Seniors

HB 2700

February 16, 2022

(Written only)

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jessica Drahota. My husband & I are former foster parents. I wanted to share our experience so that you might understand what some of our KS foster children are experiencing while in DCF custody.

A little boy was placed with us at the age of 2.5 years old. He remained in our home & family for THREE years. In those three years, he had completely & fully bonded with our family. He called us 'Mom & Dad'. He called our biological children his 'brother & sister'. He was safe, stable, happy & thriving in our care & he was SO LOVED.

He also had biological half siblings that he visited 2 times per month. His half-brother was to be looked into as a potential adoptive option at the Best Interest Staffing.

When the Best Interest Staffing finally occurred, **we were chosen to adopt our little boy!** It was a unanimous vote at the Best Interest Staffing that he should stay with us. He viewed us as his Mom & Dad, while he viewed his 19 year old half-brother as a brother. To move him would be a huge disruption in his life, they agreed. **DCF reviewed that decision & signed & approved us to adopt our son!**

Except, the brother appealed that decision. We received a shocking call one day from our KVC case manager telling us we needed to 'sit down'. The adoption decision had been reversed by DCF & our little boy would be moving to his brother's home to be adopted. When his therapist told him the news that he would be leaving our house to go live with his brother, he became so upset & hysterical that we could hear him wailing through the walls as we sat out in the waiting room. The therapist pleaded with KVC & DCF to slow down the transition & make sure he had a solid visitation & therapy plan in place. The request was denied. He moved to his brother's house that week & **he never got to see us again!**

It has now been over 3 years since he moved away & we truly never got to see him again.

Humbly,
Jessica & Jason Drahota

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