

Act One

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Adoption in Child Time, Inc.

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ONE YEAR IS A LONG TIME IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD

adoption in child time (Act, Inc) is a not-for-profit corporation that

- promotes early permanence for foster children;
- trains attorneys in adoption law and policies;
- provides information and attorney referrals to foster parents interested in adoption.

toll-free in indiana:
1-877-Act-4kids;
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812-339-7403

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It's Time to Get on Board and Support Party Status for Long-Term Foster Parents

Readers of ACT ONE: contact your state senator and representative immediately. Legislators listen to voters.

A bill has been introduced in the Indiana legislature to give long-term foster parents party status in all matters pertaining to Children In Need of Services proceedings. Long-term foster parents are defined as foster parents who have had a child in their home for 12 consecutive months or 15 of the past 22 months.

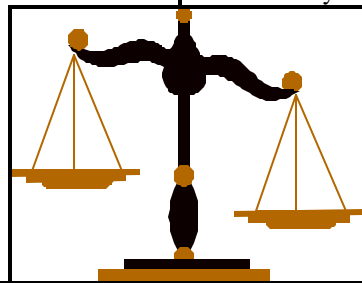
The bill has been introduced in the Indiana House of Representatives as House Bill 1168. In the Indiana Senate the bill is Senate Bill 330.

The bill has bi-partisan support in both houses of the legislature and the unanimous support of the board of the Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association (IFCAA).

The bill does have some opposition so **your support is**

needed right now. The General Assembly is in short session this year which means many issues will be considered in a brief period.

Here are some sample messages:



Bill proposes that foster parents who have had their foster child for more than one year be given legal party status.

"I want to voice my support of House Bill 1168 (or Senate Bill 330) which I believe is in the best interest of foster children."

"I am concerned about getting permanent homes for the foster children in our state. I believe House Bill 1168 (or Senate Bill 330) promotes the best interests of these children by improving their chances for a permanent home."

The bill to give legal party status to long-term foster parents is: House Bill Number 1168 and Senate Bill Number

Here's How To Contact Your Legislators

Each voter has two legislators, a senator and a representative. If you do not know the names of your senator and representative, call the voter registration office at the courthouse in your county and ask for the names of your representative and senator.

You can contact them by letter or postcard, by telephone, by e-mail or in person. Send mail to:

Name of legislator
Indiana House of Representatives or Indiana State Senate
200 W Washington
Indianapolis IN 46204

To telephone a legislator: Representatives can be reached at (317) 232-9600 or 1-800-382-9842.

Senators can be reached at (317) 232-9400 or 1-800-382-9467.

TDD numbers are (317) 232-0404 or 1-800-548-9517.

Call, give the name of your legislator and leave a message.

Many legislators publish their home phone numbers and welcome calls at home. If you know your local legislator and wish to call them at home, use your local phone book.



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In This Issue...

The bill to give foster parents legal standing...How to contact your legislators

Why Should Long-term Foster Parents Have Legal Standing?

This bill is not about foster parent rights but about the best interests of the child. Without input from long-term foster parents, the child is not well served.

Why is ACT urging you to support the bill to give long-term foster parents legal party status in matters pertaining to their foster children?

Isn't the court system already filled with many parties and their attorneys, all of whom claim to speak for the child?

Presently all of the following people have legal party status: birth parents, DFC, county prosecutor, CASA, GAL. The only major players omitted are the ones who

have the most to offer: long-term foster parents. They have information which is available nowhere else and, since foster parents adopt over 70 per cent of foster children who are adopted, they are the most likely to provide permanence.

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All of the persons who presently have legal party status, including the birth parents, have that status by

their role. They might know the child slightly or not at all.

Under this bill the only foster parents who will get to court are long-term foster parents: those who have had intimate daily contact with the child for at least the past year. They would be the only parties who necessarily know the child extremely well.

ACT supports this bill because it enhances our goal: to represent the best interest of the child and to give every child a permanent home within "child time."