

SB 52

February 7, 2011

Good Morning Chairman Owen and Committee:

My name is Kim Strunk and my husband and I are raising our granddaughters. We have been raising them for 7 years. Juliana is 8 and Mayli is 7, Mayli came home from the hospital to our home and has been here ever since. Our daughter Kaci is a drug addict and an alcoholic with several mental health diagnosis, we would like to say that she is recovering with years of sobriety but we can't, only she holds the key to that future. Finally this past year we were able to financially afford and secure legal guardianship for both of the girls.

In 2003 we saw our daughter headed down a disastrous road and our granddaughters quickly falling into the hands of SRS as CINC children. We stood up to Kaci and told her Drug Rehab, a home of her own, a job with 6 months of continuous work and AA/NA classes and she could have her children back.....she walked away to do her own thing. As of today she has been to rehab twice and still not successful, she has been incarcerated several different times with one stint for almost a whole year. The last one for 5 months.

We have provided our granddaughters with a stable loving home, something foster care systems can and can not provide. They still see their great grandparents, great great grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousins and spend holidays and fun times with family who will be there the rest of their lives. Grandparents/Kinship caregivers care about their loved ones and what happens to them in the long run it's not about how much money they can make keeping them. Grandparents and Kinship providers are taking care of children at either no cost or 1/3 of the cost to the state that Foster Care services provide. At the time of this financial crisis that the state is in, I do not understand why do we continue to place children in a system that does and does not work, when children need their family. When parents are doing stupid things, children are being taken from the only "nurturing" home life as dysfunctional and illegal as it may be and given to a "family" who may or may not really care, I beg you please to have the system revamped that places children with Grandparents/Kinship providers before placing our babies with total strangers where they may be for a week, months or even years without any biological family connections.

Thank You

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Senate Judiciary

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Attachment 14