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April 9, 2019

The Honorable Bill Montford
The Florida Senate
404 South Monroe Street, Room 410 SOB
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Re: CS/SB 1622 Exemption/Foster Parents

Dear Senator Montford:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to CS/SB 1622, creating a public record exemption for the names of foster parents.

Current law provides basic protections to foster parents and foster parent applicants – where they live and work, where their children go to school, their photographs, even the floor plans of their homes. SB 1622, as originally drafted, expands the exemption to exempt the names of foster parents and foster parent applicants. The bill was amended to stipulate that the names of foster parents and foster parent applicants will be subject to disclosure if charged with committing a crime against a foster child in their care. Unfortunately, the amendment falls woefully short in addressing our concerns and we remain opposed to the bill.

What about foster parents or foster parent applicants who commit a crime against a child *not* in their care? Or who commit a crime that calls into their suitability as a foster parent? We firmly believe that this exemption is not only contrary to the public interest, it poses a serious threat to children in the foster system. We ask again, Senator, that CS/SB 1622 be withdrawn from further consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Petersen, President

Cc: The Honorable Ed Hooper, Chair, Senate Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee