

Legislative Update

October 27, 2011

Hello everyone,

Since our legislative meeting in September, several people have met with their legislators to discuss one or more of the bills we are supporting.

Representative Schofield mentioned that one legislator has contacted her so far regarding the Post-Secondary Tuition Assistance Bill. We hope that other legislators will respond as well. Rep. Schofield is planning to introduce the bill again. We want to be sure that the bill not only addresses some waiver or assistance for college, but also addresses some assistance for other careers, such as cosmetology, the trades, etc.

Karen Coton and I have reworded some of the Foster Parent Bill of Rights to match the DCF language. The word "respect" was a concern in the Senate last year because there was fear of lawsuits over a broadly interpreted word. We have reworded that the foster parents be treated as a member of the placement team. We also added that all foster parents should be notified of all court hearings regarding a child in their care as per state and federal law. (This is still not being followed in all areas.) Since the grievance issue was removed last session with a referral to Superior Court, we have changed it to be a request for an administrative hearing. These changes have been referred to the Select Committee on Children. The Committee has agreed to sponsor the bill.

The Access to Original Birth Certificates for Adopted Adults bill has gained more support this year. Our grassroots efforts have brought more adult adoptees and birth parents forward. The group has done more activities to educate the public and to reach out to more legislators. We have met with several more legislators on a one to one basis to promote the bill. We are still exploring more possible sponsors for this bill.

CAFAP has also encouraged foster parents to ask for more information under the new Public Act 11-167, which became effective 10/1/11. I have requested feedback from families regarding this.

Please continue to contact your senators and representatives to promote the bills that are of interest to you. Each constituent can have influence!

Carolyn Goodridge, legislative Liaison