

In support of H5672, Adoption of Children Bill  
House Judiciary  
Submitted by: Melissa Santoro, LICSW; Clinical Director  
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Dear Representatives Casmirio, Noret, Donovan, Cotter, Roberts, Read, Fellela, Serpa and Spears,

I am writing to support H5672 which establishes the rights of children who are adopted, placed in foster care, or under guardianship to maintain contact with their siblings after separation. This bill would allow for ongoing connections and relationships for the State's most vulnerable children. Maintaining, encouraging and sustaining these familial ties are often the key to successful permanency outcomes for children and teens. For the past 20 years, I have spent my career working with children and teens impacted by trauma, often living in families formed through adoption and foster care. Their mental health needs are often quite significant, given their childhood experiences of abuse and neglect. Having ongoing and sustained connections with their siblings often provides the support they need to keep going. Passing this bill would ensure that the groundwork is laid down, allowing for meaningful and consistent connections and contact to occur long after permanency is established.

Sibling connections are important as they provide a long-lasting source of support, companionship, and love, helping individuals learn essential social and emotional skills such as conflict resolution, empathy, and sharing, while also creating a unique bond through shared childhood experiences and family history. Ensuring that our State's children and youth have positive sibling relationships and lifelong connections can significantly impact mental health and well-being throughout their lives.

Please give vulnerable children in Rhode Island the support they need to sustain family connection and relationships by passing H5672. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Melissa Santoro, LICSW  
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