

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill S2841**  
**Senate Committee on Finance**  
**May 5, 2026**

Chair DiPalma and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Lacroix. I am a resident of West Warwick and a foster parent for the past three and a half years. As of last week, I am also an adoptive father. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill S2841.

This legislation ensures that federal benefits owed to children in foster care are protected, accounted for, and conserved for their future.

I want to share why this matters from direct experience.

About two years ago, I first became aware that children in foster care may be eligible for federal Social Security benefits. I asked those I worked with at DCYF whether my child qualified. No one I could access was able to answer that question.

In mid-March of this year, while completing the adoption agreement, I learned for the first time that the state had been collecting approximately \$750 per month in Social Security benefits in my child's name since October 2022.

What matters most is what that represents.

At \$750 per month over that time, my child would have had approximately \$32,250 available to support his education, stability, and transition into adulthood. Instead, those funds were used to offset the cost of care.

Senate Bill S2841 addresses this directly. It requires that when the state acts as a representative payee, it may not use those benefits to reimburse itself for foster care placement, and instead must conserve or use those funds for the child's unmet needs and future.

This is not about assigning fault. It is about aligning practice with purpose.

These benefits are intended to support the child. This bill ensures they are treated that way by:

- Identifying eligible children and applying for benefits
- Providing transparency and accounting of funds
- Conserving resources for the child's future
- Supporting financial literacy and transition to adulthood

For children leaving foster care, even modest financial resources can make a meaningful difference in housing stability, education, and independence. This bill creates that opportunity in a structured and accountable way.

I share my family's experience in strong support of this legislation and offer to be a resource as you continue your work.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to children who depend on us to act in their best interest.

Respectfully submitted,

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