Alberta Darling
Wisconsin State Senator
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing, and State-
Federal Relations
Senate Bill 653
January 30, 2018

Thank you Chair Kapenga and committee members for holding a hearing on Senate Bill
653. The bill in front of you removes statutory barriers for foster families to keep their
licenses.

Strong foster families are absolutely crucial to the health and well-being of the
approximately 7,000 Wisconsin kids living in out-of-home care. Foster families provide
a semblance of support, home, and family, in the face of the trauma that youth in our
child welfare system have undergone. Foster families must be licensed by the
Department of Children and Families (DCF), a county department, or a child welfare
agency that is licensed by DCF.

Under current law, foster care licenses cannot be transferred between counties or
agencies under any circumstance. Due to this law, if a licensing agency closes, a foster
family will also lose their license, unless another agency can quickly re-license the family
before the gap in licensure can occur. This system places an entirely unnecessary
barrier on foster families who have already been licensed. Senate Bill 653 reforms this
system to create a continuity process for licensed foster parents when the county or
welfare agency who licensed them is no longer able to issue licenses. Under the bill, if
an agency is no longer able to provide licenses, a foster family's license will transfer to
the next applicable agency.

The second key change the bill makes is to allow for specific instances of cross-county
licensure. Currently, a county may license a home outside their jurisdiction with the
consent of the host county. However, that license is child specific and expires when the
child leaves the home. Senate Bill 653 expands this program to include more instances
for cross-county licensure, so long as both counties consent to the licensing.

Senate Bill 653 makes technical changes to improve the licensing process for foster
families. Both of the changes in Senate Bill 653 will remove barriers for foster families
who have already been licensed. Keeping strong foster families in our state is vital for
helping our foster youth.

I'd like to thank Representatives Pronschinske and Doyle for their work on this bill. I
urge your support on Senate Bill 653.

TREIG E. PRONSCHINSKE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 92nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 653
Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations
January 30, 2018

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 653.

Senator Darling and I have authored this proposal as part of the effort to make positive changes to the foster care system. This bill was inspired by the comments we heard from the folks in Buffalo County during the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care hearing in La Crosse last year. The request we heard was for help with making it possible to transfer validly licensed foster homes to another licensing authority.

Further, this bill will allow counties to license foster homes in other counties, rather than just on a per child basis and strengthens a licensing authority's ability to revoke a foster home license.

These changes will help counties to share resources and increase the number of available homes at a time when they are so desperately needed.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this proposal.

Notes from 1/17/2018 Testimony Regarding Foster Care Bills

Deb Suchla, Trempealeau County Human Services Director
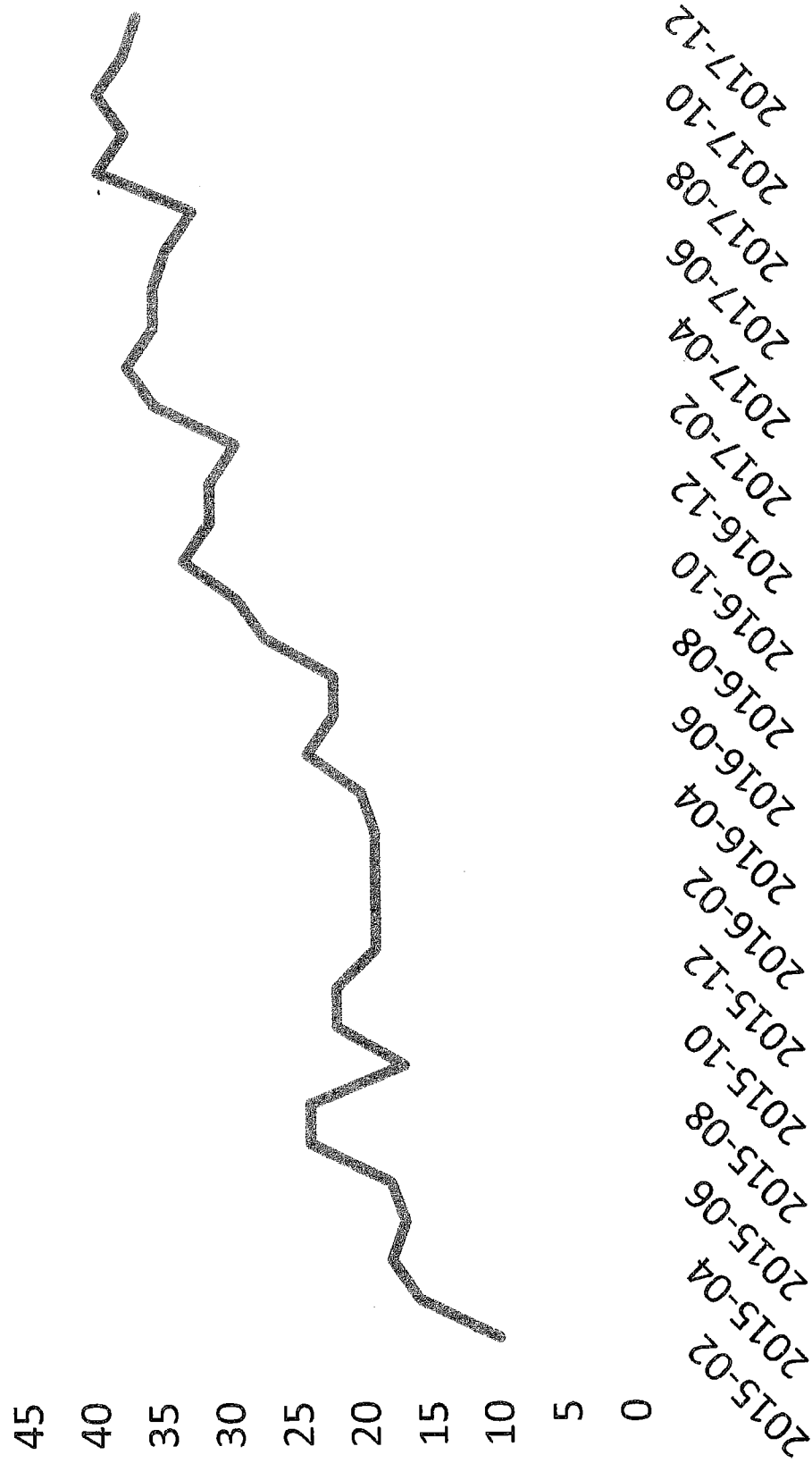
Trempealeau County stats:

- Population in 2016 was 29,623 – 42nd highest in the state
- 22% of Trempealeau County Births were to Hispanic mothers – highest percentage in the state.
- November 2017 Unemployment rate in Trempealeau County was 2.1% - the 4th lowest in the state
- Trempealeau County had the 7th highest per capita rate of Meth submissions to the State Crime Lab in 2015
- Trempealeau County had the 5th highest increase in Child Welfare caseload between 2013 and 2016 (chart attached)
- The number of children in out of home care in Trempealeau County has nearly quadrupled in less than 3 years. In Feb 2015 we had 10 kids in out of home care. In late 2017 we had 39 kids in out of home care. (Graph attached)
- When looking at how many of the out of home care cases are due to drugs in 2017 – all but 10 cases had drug involvement meaning that the entire growth in out of home care is due to the drug issues.
- In 2013 we had 7 case worker in Child Welfare. In 2014 we added one Program Aide position. In 2017 the County Board approved an additional investigator position. That is a 28.5% increase in staffing while we have experienced a 100% increase in caseload.

CHIPS: Child Protection Cases

County	Population	2013 CHIPS Cases	2014 CHIPS Cases	2015 CHIPS Cases	2016 CHIPS Cases	2013-2016 Change	Rank
Forest	9,057	56	59	93	172	207.14%	1
Monroe	45,549	352	543	703	729	107.10%	2
Marathon	135,868	803	1055	1259	1629	102.86%	3
Taylor	20,455	106	157	194	202	90.57%	4
Trempealeau	29,550	210	233	313	398	89.52%	5
Chippewa	63,531	297	334	467	550	85.19%	6
Ashland	15,843	119	167	204	217	82.35%	7
Dunn	44,497	268	227	335	485	80.97%	8
Adams	20,148	286	304	410	512	79.02%	9
Iron	5,794	28	44	61	50	78.57%	10
Sawyer	16,376	571	621	854	965	69.00%	11
Portage	70,408	872	1054	1198	1448	66.06%	12
Vernon	30,506	232	348	324	383	65.09%	13
Sauk	63,642	653	721	1031	1069	63.71%	14
Oconto	37,435	302	357	392	467	54.64%	15
Dodge	88,502	335	422	461	511	52.54%	16
Vilas	21,387	220	191	339	318	44.55%	17
Sheboygan	115,569	364	541	555	517	42.03%	18
Washburn	15,552	92	142	200	130	41.30%	19
La Crosse	118,212	810	1264	1258	1144	41.23%	20
Price	13,645	127	133	122	179	40.94%	21
Washington	133,674	431	511	358	596	38.28%	22
Langlade	19,223	481	480	677	653	35.76%	23
Burnett	15,159	321	387	443	429	33.64%	24
Green Lake	18,856	128	158	235	170	32.81%	25
Grant	52,250	378	460	427	477	26.19%	26
Kenosha	168,437	1309	1491	1295	1643	25.52%	27
Menominee	4,573	189	212	230	237	25.40%	28
Fond du Lac	101,973	1275	1544	1595	1548	21.41%	29
Bayfield	14,977	107	99	79	127	18.69%	30
Waukesha	396,488	1020	934	1027	1182	15.88%	31
Crawford	16,391	124	120	138	143	15.32%	32
Milwaukee	957,735	16677	22114	20579	19130	14.71%	33
Barron	45,563	581	715	713	650	11.88%	34
Polk	43,441	652	577	632	721	10.58%	35
St Croix	87,513	1045	1123	1210	1147	9.76%	36
Wood	73,435	1497	1485	1468	1638	9.42%	37

County	Population					% Change	#
Waupaca	51,945	462	640	565	503	8.87%	38
Winnebago	169,546	1875	1833	2032	2036	8.59%	39
Green	37,186	497	556	652	539	8.45%	40
Racine	195,080	2840	2875	3495	2982	5.00%	41
Oneida	35,567	332	372	374	348	4.82%	42
Douglas	43,601	754	700	816	790	4.77%	43
Marquette	15,075	92	188	159	96	4.35%	44
Manitowoc	79,806	922	873	930	935	1.41%	45
Eau Claire	102,105	1021	1058	926	1027	0.59%	46
Iowa	23,813	215	192	198	214	-0.47%	47
Walworth	102,804	955	697	823	922	-3.46%	48
Lincoln	27,980	250	290	249	236	-5.60%	49
Jefferson	84,559	509	377	448	476	-6.48%	50
Columbia	56,743	779	984	910	724	-7.06%	51
Rusk	14,124	169	164	111	157	-7.10%	52
Pierce	40,889	333	366	255	305	-8.41%	53
Lafayette	16,829	176	281	195	161	-8.52%	54
Ozaukee	87,850	522	496	453	476	-8.81%	55
Brown	258,718	3337	3292	3019	2957	-11.39%	56
Kewaunee	20,366	76	22	45	66	-13.16%	57
Richland	17,495	156	142	131	135	-13.46%	58
Outagamie	183,245	2186	2178	2015	1863	-14.78%	59
Dane	523,643	4228	4144	4186	3561	-15.78%	60
Buffalo	13,192	172	109	148	137	-20.35%	61
Juneau	26,224	624	786	631	496	-20.51%	62
Door	27,554	282	282	279	221	-21.63%	63
Waushara	24,033	365	407	337	279	-23.56%	64
Marinette	40,884	388	287	318	296	-23.71%	65
Shawano	41,304	312	534	313	233	-25.32%	66
Jackson	20,554	283	288	375	211	-25.44%	67
Rock	161,448	4241	3493	3312	3068	-27.66%	68
Calumet	49,762	332	305	241	218	-34.34%	69
Clark	34,445	480	294	328	245	-48.96%	70
Florence	4,464	43	31	29	15	-65.12%	71
Pepin	7,290	114	58	22	33	-71.05%	72
TOTAL STATE		33516	32779	32630	30467	-9.10%	

Trempealeau County
Child Out of Home Placements (excl. Kinship Care)

Y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45

X-axis: 2015-02, 2015-04, 2015-06, 2015-08, 2015-10, 2015-12, 2016-02, 2016-04, 2016-06, 2016-08, 2016-10, 2016-12, 2017-02, 2017-04, 2017-06, 2017-08, 2017-10, 2017-12

201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916
Telephone: 608-422-7000
Fax: 608-261-6972

Governor Scott Walker
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Secretary's Office

Date: January 30, 2018
To: Members of the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations
From: Lonna Morouney, Legislative Liaison
Fredi Bove, Administrator, Division of Safety and Permanence
Jonelle Brom, Section Chief, Out-of-Home-Care Section
Re: 2017 Senate Bill 653

Chairman Kapenga and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 653, one of the recommended legislative proposals from the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care. My name is Lonna Morouney and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Department of Children and Families. I am accompanied by Fredi Bove, Administrator for the Division of Safety and Permanence, and Jonelle Brom, Section Chief for the Out-of-Home Care Section.

Senate Bill 653 makes two changes to foster parent licensing in order to improve stability and continuity of foster care placements:

- Under current law, if a child placing agency is no longer able to license foster homes for reasons such as an agency closure or revocation or suspension, foster parents must start the licensing process over from the beginning with a new child placing agency. The bill would allow the foster parent license to transfer to a different child placing agency without a gap in licensure. The Department most often sees this licensure gap and process duplication when a private child placing agency goes out of businesses.

- The second change under the bill relates to out-of-county foster parent licensing. Under current law, counties may license a foster home in a different county but only for a specific child. The bill allows for the license in the different county to be a general license if both counties agree and if the counties are contiguous.

Both provisions support foster parents by providing greater certainty and continuity for foster parents and the children placed in their homes. Foster parents play a critical role in providing caring homes for children in need. This bill avoids imposing on foster parents needless disruption in the continuity of their children's care and additional administrative workload burden under specific circumstances.