



Adam Neylon

State Representative • 98th Assembly District

DATE: January 27th, 2016

FROM: State Representative Adam Neylon

TO: Assembly Committee on Children and Families

RE: Supporting AB 745

Chairperson Rodriguez and fellow Members of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families:

I am Representative Neylon from Waukesha County, and I am here to testify in support of Assembly Bill 745. I am joined by Fredi Bove from the Department of Children and Families' Division of Safety and Permanence, who will be helping me discuss AB 745, and together we hope to answer any questions you may have.

This legislation is aimed at bringing Wisconsin law into federal compliance with Title IV-E foster care program as amended by the recent "Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families" and "Justice for Victims of Trafficking" acts. Specifically, AB 745 addresses how we treat children who go missing from out-of-home care.

Currently, there are limitations on what information the DCF can give law enforcement when a child goes missing from out-of-home care. This bill will improve information sharing between child welfare agencies and law enforcement for missing children in two important ways:

1. Child welfare agencies will be authorized to take and retain photographs of children under the placement, care or supervision of the agency. Should the child go missing, the agency can share that photograph with law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, based on guidelines established by the DCF.
2. Modifies the state child welfare automated information system, eWiSACWIS, to generate automated messages to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children when a child goes missing. It is expected that any costs related to modification of eWiSACWIS and training for caseworkers will be absorbed within the current agency budget.

This bill incorporates positive, common sense changes needed to help keep at-risk children safe. I hope you will join me in supporting this vital legislation. Thank you.

Now I will turn it over to Fredi Bove from the Department of Children and Families to discuss some of these changes in more detail.



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Governor Scott Walker
Secretary Eloise Anderson
Secretary's Office

Date: January 27, 2016

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove, Administrator for the Division of Safety and Permanence

Re: Department Position on 2016 AB 745 – in Support

Representative Rodriguez and members of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on AB 745. My name is Fredi-Ellen Bove and I am the Administrator for the Division of Safety and Permanence in the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Recent federal legislation, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act and the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, amend the federal Title IV-E foster care program to improve the well-being of children and youth in out-of-home care, including practices and protocols related to children missing from out-of-home care. In order to continue receiving federal Title IV-E child welfare funding accounting for \$105 million per year, the state must comply with these federal law changes by September 29, 2016.

Children Missing from Out-of-Home Care

Foster parents and other out-of-home care providers are committed to providing safe, stable, and nurturing homes for the children in their care. However, despite the attention and efforts of out-of-home care providers, children in out-of-home care sometimes run away.

In cases where a child does run away from an out-of-home setting, the child welfare agency collaborates with local law enforcement to undertake strong efforts to locate the missing child. National studies have concluded that children who have run away from out-of-home care are at high risk of becoming prey to sex traffickers. The new federal legislation enhances the tools available to law enforcement and child welfare agencies to expedite the location of missing children, so as to reduce their risk of becoming sex trafficking victims or undergoing other dangerous or harmful experiences.

Current state policy requires agencies to contact law enforcement when a child is missing from out-of-home care, but has limitations on how and what information may be shared by the child

welfare agency with law enforcement. Current state policy does not comply fully with the new federal requirements.

The new federal law requires child welfare agencies to work closely with law enforcement through the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to strengthen efforts to locate a child who is missing from out-of-home care setting.

To align with federal law, AB 745 grants child welfare agencies the ability to take and retain photographs of children under the placement, care, or supervision of the child welfare agency. In the event a child is determined missing, the child welfare agency may share the photograph and information about the child with local law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), based on guidelines provided by Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Specifically, under AB 475, child welfare agencies will notify law enforcement within 8 hours of the determination of a child missing so the child can be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and will notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children within 24 hours of the determination that a child is missing.

Child welfare caseworkers will take or obtain a photograph of each child under the placement, care, or supervision of the child welfare agency within 30 days of entering into the child welfare system. The photographs will be maintained in the eWiSACWIS Child Welfare data system. The photographs will be updated every six months by child welfare caseworkers, to ensure the photo is up-to-date. The child's photograph will be subject to strict confidentiality safeguards similar to other information stored in the state child welfare data system.

The state child welfare automated information system, eWiSACWIS, will be modified to generate automatic messages to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, when a child is reported missing, to minimize the workload impact on child welfare caseworkers of this new federal requirement.

Aligning Wisconsin statutes and policies with the new federal requirements for reporting a child or youth missing from out-of-home care will improve current child welfare practice, expediting the location of children who go missing, particularly those who may be at risk of becoming victims of sex trafficking. It will also ensure the continuation of federal child welfare Title IV-E funding for the state of Wisconsin.

The Department thanks Representative Neylon for sponsoring this bill. We thank the committee for your consideration of the Department's comments and appreciate the Committee's commitment to support positive outcomes for vulnerable children and families in our state.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

January 27, 2016

Regarding Bills AB 737 and AB 745

Dear Esteemed Members of the Committee on Children and Families:

The Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin has prioritized public policies that diminish human trafficking and that help the victims of trafficking. The scandal of enslaving children in our state is real. Thank you for your dedicated work in developing just policies to diminish the problem and to help victims.

Today, we ask that you to please support **AB 737** as one of the many ways we need to address the problem of sex trafficking. We are not direct service providers. However, everything we have heard in our dialogue individually and at meetings with direct service providers indicates that there is a legal gulf between law enforcement and non-caregivers who are abusive to children, and AB 737 would shrink that gap. It is important to include child sex trafficking in the definition of child abuse and to mandate investigations of child abuse when police suspect the abusers are non-caregivers, and then to direct those children to receive services. AB 737 includes these components. Getting at the non-caregivers will increase our state's ability to find traffickers and to help their victims as well as victims of other types of abuse.

We also ask that you support **AB 745**, requiring agency-placed children to report missing children to law enforcement within eight hours and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children within 24 hours. This is another very good bill that would diminish trafficking and other forms of abuse.

We need a way to mainstream investigations of traffickers and to get services to our youth. We can do better for God's children in Wisconsin.

Thank you and blessings upon you and your work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cindy Crane".

Rev. Cindy Crane

Director

MEMO

TO: Representative Jessie Rodriguez, Chair
Members of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families
FR: Connie Schulze, System Director – Advocacy and Public Policy
DT: January 26, 2016
RE: Please support Assembly Bill 737 & Assembly Bill 745

Assembly Bill 737 (AB-737) and Assembly Bill 745 (AB-745) are scheduled for a public hearing in the Assembly Committee on Children and Families on January 27, 2016. I write today to draw your attention to the following.

Ministry Health Care and Columbia St. Mary's strongly support AB-737 and AB-745.

We appreciate the efforts of the authors of AB-737 and AB-745 to aid victims of human trafficking by aligning state law with provisions of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act and the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. This legislation will go a long way toward identifying and locating victims of trafficking by expanding investigations of suspected trafficking and by improving information sharing among law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for missing kids in out-of-home care.

Human trafficking is recognized around the world as modern day slavery. Trafficking affects individuals of all ages, races, social standings and both genders. Traffickers use deception, intimidation, isolation, violence and coercion to gain compliance from their victims and then dispose of them once their usefulness or profitability has diminished. The victims are left with physical and emotional scars that can last a lifetime.

Unfortunately, Wisconsin is not immune to the tragedy of human trafficking. Late last year, the FBI announced the results of an ongoing sting operation known as, "Operation Cross Country" that led to the rescue of 149 victims of human trafficking. Victims of all ages and their traffickers were found throughout Wisconsin including Appleton, Brown County, Fond du Lac, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Monroe, Oak Creek, Oshkosh Racine and West Allis. In fact, Wisconsin tied for third in the nation in total number of *juveniles* recovered: Denver—20 juveniles; Detroit—19 juveniles; Las Vegas—nine juveniles; and Milwaukee—nine juveniles.

With the above in mind, we respectfully request your support for AB-737 and AB-745 in committee. Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at connie.schulze@ministryhealth.org or on my cell phone at 920/245-1034 if you have questions regarding this request for support.