



Dear Chairperson:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB4131; which would establish the right for adoption by any couple. I would like to offer the following points in support of this critical legislation.

- 1.) There are currently approximately 4,500 children in the State of Michigan that are waiting for an adoptive family and a permanent home. Creating new policies by changing adoption law will create new opportunities for more of these waiting children to be placed in loving, safe homes. The more kids in any loving family arraignment, the better.
- 2.) This bill would establish a pathway for smoother transitions and more stability in families if one parent should die or if a divorce occurs. Stepparent adoptions are already commonplace in the State of Michigan. This bill would simply expand the scope of Stepparent adoptions to domestic partners, relatives or a friend of the remaining custodial parent. In cases of terminal sickness or serious health situations of a parent, this bill provides stability in the continuity of care for the children in that family unit by establishing the decision-making rights of an additional involved adult.
- 3.) As the number of couples making the commitment to marriage is declining, the number of single parent homes, domestic partnerships or co-habitation of couples is increasing. The intent of this bill is to proactively establish and protect the rights of couples or individuals in these types of relationships to have a family, and find the support needed to make their homes safer and stronger.
- 4.) If more children are adopted or placed in homes, the strain on Michigan support systems and taxpayers will be eased. Resources will then be able to be used for other critical services in our State.
- 5.) Similar initiatives across the county have the support of organizations such as American Medical Association, American Pediatric Association, Child Welfare League of America, and the National Association of Social Workers.

- 6.) This bill would enable children to potentially double up on the benefits of services and resources such as Social Security, health insurance, and pensions available to them in these types of family units.

Again, thank you for considering HB 4131 today. As a committee, you have the opportunity to improve the lives of countless children and adoptive parents across our great State of Michigan by advancing this bill to the full Michigan House for a vote. In many cases, numbers speak much louder than words. Our goal is to slash the number of kids waiting to be placed in loving homes. The financial impact of this is significant. Please be counted among the number of proud supporters of this impactful bill.

Sincerely,

President, anytwowilldo.org