

March 20, 2018

TO: Federal and State Affairs Committee

RE: In-Person proponent of HB 2687 and SB 401

FROM: Devin Penny

I'm Devin Penny, an adoptive father of a set of twins that are 18 mo. old now. We have 3 other children. We obviously did not adopt because we needed more kids. We knew we had love to share in our family and recognized there is a great need for that love in a multitude of innocent children born daily in this country and throughout the world. We have no savior complex, we are not the answer to the world's problems... but rather than stand up preaching about the numerous issues we could all debate; we could, right now, be a part of the solution. Our hearts: to love, just because we have love to give; is one that has motivated so many others and been the backbone for organizations and families alike for at least 40 years in the United States. As you all know the process of placement is a delicate and expensive one chiefly because when the state takes responsibility to place an innocent child in the hands of another family it is no longer acceptable for it to be the roulette of biology. As it is said, "no one gets to choose their parents". But in placement, it is incumbent upon us to do our best to at least try to safeguard these helpless children from being placed in harm's way. Unfortunately this is no easy task and with all the screening and checking and safeguards, we can't actually know if a family is indeed "safe" and still, sometimes we are wrong.

I stand before you today unsure if we need legal action or a new law or something passed, you know better than I do how this system works or how it is supposed to, but I come to plead with you, "protect the discretion of the men and women who, in love, take it upon themselves to compile this information and then using all their life experience place these children in a place that they are as convinced as one person can be, is safe".

We adopted through an organization that shared our faith, that we adopt because; in love; we were adopted into the family of God ourselves. Because of these shared values we could be more completely known and thus the vetting would be all the more trustworthy. There are places in this country where the people doing the vetting are no longer allowed to use their own best judgment and life experience and yet are asked to maintain the same standard of certainty of safe placement! If we had workers aplenty perhaps this would be sane; or if these organizations that work out of the world view that Christ gave us were profoundly unsuccessful or doing a meager 1% of the overall placements it might then be within reason to feel that in the name of "tolerance" such a service might be sacrificed. But specifically, here in Kansas, this is not the case. My twins, Grace and Justice are as safe now as my children Jade, Eden and Treyson. But, as I said, we... my family are nothing. We are a drop in a tide of need and the workers are few. Please, do what is needed to protect these workers even though they have a Christian worldview from those who would intend to do good but ultimately compromise their ability to insure the children born tomorrow will be as safe as mine.

Thank you for your time.

