

To: Speaker of the House Salvatore DiMasi
Chairman Robert DeLeo, House Ways & Means Committee

Cc: Mary Ann Calia, Chief of Staff/ Chief Policy Advisor , Office of Speaker DiMasi
Daniel Toscano, Deputy Chief Policy Advisor/ Legal Counsel, Office of Speaker DiMasi
Jason Aluia, Deputy Chief of Staff/ Legislative Director, Office of Speaker DiMasi
James Eisenberg, Chief of Staff, House Ways & Means Committee
Toby Morelli, Legislative Liaison, House Ways & Means Committee

From: Charles Glick

Date: May 15, 2007

Re: S. 75 (An Act Further Regulating the Placement of Certain Children) Now Before the House

I appreciate the opportunity to call a pressing matter to your attention. S. 75 recently passed the Senate and is now before the House Ways & Means Committee. I would respectfully urge the House to move as quickly as possible to pass this legislation and prevent undue harm to children, birth parents, and families wishing to adopt.

S. 75 is a technical correction to legislation that was passed this summer changing the legal definition of "placement agencies" in Massachusetts. Moreover, the technical correction bill that is now before the House Ways & Means Committee is the exact same language that was passed by both the House and Senate with unanimous support and sent to Governor Romney on the last day of the legislative session. Unfortunately, the Governor abrogated his responsibility for child welfare when he chose to pocket veto the legislation.

This legislation was originally filed because earlier this year, the legal definition of "placement agencies" (Chapter 28A, Section 9) was amended to allow a well respected Massachusetts "for-profit" foster care agency to provide foster care placement services without the need to partner with a "non-profit" placement agency. However, in the process of allowing "for-profit" *foster* care agencies to engage in foster placement services, the Commonwealth also unintentionally allowed for "for-profit" *adoption placements* in Massachusetts, a task that up until now had been the exclusive responsibility of the "non-profit" community. The introduction of for-profit adoption agencies will, as it has in other states, drive up the cost of adoption dramatically, force existing non-profit adoption agencies out of business, and cause untold harm to children, birth parents and families wishing to adopt.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has always been a leader in setting high ethical standards for adoption practice. Unfortunately, the consequences of this change only came to light after the law went into effect. The proponents of the original change to allow for-profit foster care placements remain in full support of the present effort to pass

language stipulating that for the purposes of adoption, only non-profit agencies serve as placement agencies.

The door to "for-profit" adoption will remain open until this change in the definition of "placement agency" (as it relates to adoption) is amended. As such, and because it was not our intent to open this door in the first place, I believe that it is imperative that the enclosed "technical correction" language be enacted as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued attention and support for addressing this important issue.