



Written Testimony of Betsy Fordyce in Support of HB 21-1073 for the Transportation & Local Government Committee Hearing on March 17, 2021

Mister Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Betsy Fordyce, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center. I am writing in support of HB 21-1073 as I believe it will increase public awareness and in turn, aid in recruitment of much-needed foster homes across our state.

For the last four decades, the Children's Law Center has advocated for children and youth who have experienced trauma and instability, ranging from birth to young adulthood. In court rooms, at the legislature, and around community tables, we push for young people across Colorado to have what they need to thrive.

While we certainly work to keep children in their homes with their parents whenever possible, we recognize that is not always the case. Many of the transition-age youth we serve have experienced numerous placements over the course of their childhoods. The Children's Law Center has the great honor of hosting project Foster Power, a group of current and former foster youth, ages 15 to 25+, who are using their own voices and experiences to improve the system through youth-led organizing and advocacy. Recently, I had the privilege of listening in as project Foster Power youth brainstormed what it would have been like to have placements that better met their needs. I heard so much shared around the anxiety of placements – the uncertainty, the anticipation, and the experience of living with strangers. I also heard stories of what worked – of what true support and care look like. We need more of those positive experiences.

Colorado's foster homes directly impact the well-being and development of the children and youth in their care. Being a foster parent is such a difficult and important role. We need more individuals who are willing and able to open up their homes to children in need. HB 21-1073 will shed light on this issue. With every "Support Foster Families" license plate on Colorado roads, more members of our community will think of foster families, and perhaps, consider their own abilities to get involved on behalf of children in their community. Moreover, through the individual donations generated with these specialty plates, additional resources will be available to nonprofits who support these foster families.

I ask that you vote in support of HB 21-1073. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Fordyce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Betsy Fordyce

