

Chairman Ginter, Vice Chair LaTourette, Ranking Member Boyd, and committee members, Thank you for hearing my testimony for House Bill 420.

My name is Elizabeth Harris. I am a three numbered felon. That means I have been incarcerated in prison three times. One wrong turn. That's all it took. One wrong turn in a seemingly perfect life turned into a life of crime and prison.

I have been out of the judicial system now for more than seventeen years, but I will never get back the time I spent away from my three children.

My family (at the time) didn't know WHAT to do with my kids. They were worried about my going in and out of prison and worried about the stability of my kids. So my family decided NOT to be an enabler and decided that taking my children from my care was the best for them. I lost custody.

My kids are the product of foster care AND adoption.

My two oldest kids grew up in foster care, and the middle child was finally adopted by a lovely family that first took him in as a foster kid.

I had no contact from them until three years ago. And they expressed their upbringing to me. Some ups and downs, but the most part they had a roof over their head and a place to eat.

My middle child has a strong love for his adopted mother. Which I pray to God everyday for. And they have a bright future BECAUSE they were NOT witness to seeing their mom IN AND OUT of prison.

My feelings for foster care are STRONG. Mostly because if it wasn't for FOSTER CARE, I do not know where my kids would have ended up.

Adoption awareness is very real in my world. It gives families hope that being a parent one day is possibility. It gives kids that were abandoned by their natural parents that there is another family to give them love and a nurturing home and environment.

Everyone of us could have taken the wrong path in life. But that shouldn't affect these beautiful children.

Thank you for listening to my testimony on behalf of this bill.

