



Jessica Warner

Senate Bill 361

Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee

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Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on SB 361. My name is Jessica Warner and I am the Director of Legislative Affairs for Ohio Right to Life. On behalf of Ohio Right to Life and our statewide membership and affiliates, I am here today to speak in support of the Family Forward Initiative.

We know that there are various reasons why a parent might decide that adoption is the best option for their child. Perhaps the pregnancy was unplanned, and the mother isn't sure she's ready to take care of her baby. Maybe financial, emotional, or other circumstances make the transition into parenthood difficult. For whatever reason a parent has, adoption is a brave and selfless decision that places a child in the care of another loving family. Adoption is a truly life-giving choice. Since Ohio's state policy is to prefer childbirth over abortion, whether that leads to parenting or adoption, we recognize our responsibility to ensure that adoption is the easiest and safest option available.

With this in mind, Ohio Right to Life has worked with the legislature over the past decade to expand Ohio tax credits for adoption and increase protections in the adoption process in order to ensure that both birth parents and adoptive families can simply focus on providing love and care to the children involved.



The cost of adoption can be one of the most challenging aspects of the process and sadly even a deterrent to many families, with fees and expenses ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 and beyond. Many of these costs arise early in the process, and only in the years following the adoption will families be able to redeem the state and federal tax credits that are designed to cut down on these enormous costs. By offering low interest loans through the Family Forward Initiative, we can alleviate financial stress for families that have started the adoption process. This vital program will open the doors to families who might otherwise struggle to adopt and ensure that adoption is an accessible option for all Ohioans.

We are grateful for a Legislature, Governor, and Treasurer who continue to create innovative ways to truly invest in Ohio children and families.

On behalf of Ohio Right to Life, I respectfully ask that you support SB 361.