

I am writing today in support of House Bill 7 which would provide Publicly Funded Child Care eligibility to foster parents regardless of income. I have been a licensed foster parent for over 4 years. My husband and I are licensed as a treatment foster home and care for children with medical and trauma/mental health needs. We also both work full time. We currently have 1 child placed in our home and pay \$1520 a month for full time child care. We just started receiving \$1000 a month for his per diem after he's received multiple medical diagnoses and his level of care was increased to treatment level. Prior to that, our diem was \$700 per month. That means we are spending between \$500-\$800 out of pocket each month for child care for a child that isn't ours. While I love doing foster care and don't want it to be about the money, the harsh reality is that many people who would be excellent foster parents can't afford to do so because they don't have the extra income. Some parents choose to stay home and quit their jobs but is that really what we want to encourage? I have already had to go on intermittent FMLA to miss work each week for my foster child's medical and therapy appointments and I am thankful to have a job that supports me doing so. My husband and I love each child in our home as our own. We would love to be able to take in additional children and this bill would allow us to do that. Thank you for considering it!

Elizabeth McAllister