

CCI

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Please SUPPORT HB12-1047

Non-Safety Licensing Standards Kinship Foster Care (Kefalas, Newell)

The Bill:

This legislation will permit counties to grant a non-safety waiver, without creating a new entitlement program. This will expedite the process of relative placements and promote safe and increased use of kinship care for children and youth in foster care system.

The Problem:

- More than 75% of children in relative foster homes in Colorado are in unlicensed homes.
- Children in unlicensed homes are not eligible for financial assistance to support relative foster families to take care of a child in their custody. This can create a disincentive for relatives to take responsibility for a relative involved in the child welfare system.
- Non-safety licensing standards, like requirements that a child be placed in a bedroom of a certain size, can create barriers to families who would otherwise license their home.
- Federal law allows states to waive non-safety licensing standards on a case-by-case basis.
- In Colorado, this process takes more time than is available when the immediate placement of a child is necessary, and so it is rarely used. There were only 9 waivers approved by the CDHS in 2009.

Benefits of relative placement and kinship care:

- Children in kinship care are less likely to re-enter care than children in foster care – this reduces costs in the child welfare system.
- Kinship placements tend to be more stable than foster care placements and there are less placement disruptions.
- Children placed with relatives are more likely to be placed with siblings and maintain relationships with birth parents and relatives.
- Children in kinship care are more likely to remain in their community of origin and maintain connections to cultural identity.
- Children in kinship care are more likely to remain in the same school and benefit from their school support system.

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