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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2011
TO: ALL HOUSE MEMBERS
FROM: REPRESENTATIVE LOUISE BISHOP *LWB*
SUBJECT: ADOPTION LEGISLATION

I plan to introduce legislation that amends the state's adoption law. The proposed changes will provide more protection and permanency for children and ensure more finality in the adoption process.

Key provisions in the bill include:

- counseling for birth parents through an existing fund created for this purpose.
- involuntary termination of parental rights for serious crimes against a child, a child's sibling or another child in the parent's home. The serious crimes track criteria in the Juvenile Act when efforts to reunite a child with a parent do not apply.
- expedited proceedings for adoption of an abandoned child.
- criteria for notice to an alleged father whose whereabouts are unknown.
- state and federal criminal clearances and child abuse checks for adoptive parents included in a family profile, also referred to as a home study.
- an interview conducted in the home of an adoptive parent as part of a family profile.
- three in-home visits by an adoption agency supervising an adoption placement.
- expansion of expenses that can be reimbursed by an adoptive parent.
- registration with the state adoption registry of any child for whom a petition to adopt has not been filed within 30 days of termination of parental rights.
- limiting court challenges to an adoption decree and limiting the basis for a court to vacate an adoption decree .

The bill reflects many provisions in HB 2082, an adoption bill that I introduced last session. It includes recommendations from interest groups that have worked on improvements in adoption law.

If you are interested in co-sponsoring this legislation, please contact Heather Walsh in my office at 717-772-9901 (6487) or e-mail her at hwalsh@pahouse.net as soon as possible.