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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Honorable Richard Geist, chairman

Wednesday, May 2, 2001

Good morning, and thank you Mr. Chairman, and fellow committee members for the opportunity to present testimonial support for HB 559, sponsored by Rep. Coleman, which would create a "Friend for Life" registration plate for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The additional cost to obtain such a license plate would be \$35.00; and fifteen of those thirty-five dollars would be distributed to non-profit adoption agencies. The design of the plate would simply illustrate the importance that we all place on the life of a child and symbolically celebrate the value of making the choice for adoption – a good choice for the child, the birth parents, and the adoptive parents.

This license plate is not meant to spark controversy nor polarize the driving public. It is meant to remind those who see it, that adoption is an appropriate and positive choice for all parties in the adoption triangle. In a time when literally thousands of dollars are spent on advertising to promote the adoption of children who are part of the statewide adoption network, this would be a powerful and inexpensive reminder message to all who see it that adoption is an important and meaningful choice to be made.

I can speak about the adoption triangle, and the value of choosing life and adoption, from two of the three perspectives of that so-called triangle. I am an adopted child, and my husband and I adopted our son 24 years ago. In a time less public, I invite any of you to ask me about the differences that choosing life and adoption has made in my life and in bringing me here to this place and time. My husband and I are two of thousands of Pennsylvanians whose family life has been enriched by children who came to us through adoption and who would proudly support non-profit agencies through the purchase of this specialty plate.

Think too, for a moment about the third side of that triangle – the birth parents. In recent years their unselfish act has been overlooked and undervalued. I use those words carefully after many conversations with birth parents who made a difficult choice, but felt that our society as a whole no longer supports them or applauds their decision. I recently had a conversation with a seventeen year old birth mother who approached me after my speech at a local high school in my district. She shared that she had given up a child the year before, and thanked me for publicly praising birth parents who make such a noble and unselfish decision. I had no idea anyone in the audience was a “birth parent” and had responded to a student’s question on what it was like “being adopted and a parent of an adopted child.”

I believe the “Friends for Life” license plate would be a simple reminder that adoption is a valued choice and those in the adoption triangle are valued for their choices and commitment.

Thank you for your time and attention.