

SB 13: License to Discriminate in Foster Care

What the bill does: Allows child welfare agencies paid for by our tax dollars to refuse to serve LGBTQ families and children.

WHY THIS BILL IS WRONG

1. All children are worthy of safe, loving homes. With almost 7,000 children in foster care and a shortage of families to take these children in, West Virginia can't afford to let child welfare agencies turn even a single qualified family away.
2. This bill would allow taxpayer-funded child welfare agencies to keep kids in group homes or congregate care settings, rather than placing them with a loving, qualified couples simply because the couple doesn't share the agency's exact religious views.
3. Our tax dollars should not support discrimination. Child welfare agencies funded by the state of West Virginia should not be allowed to turn away families solely because of factors that have nothing to do with whether or not they would make good parents.
4. This bill is written too broadly and could cost the state significantly. It could have a serious toll on the next generation's mental health, since since child welfare agencies would be able to turn away LGBTQ teenagers who are victims of abuse or neglect. Child advocates also have concerns the bill could run afoul of federal spending rules, and could cost West Virginia needed federal dollars.
5. Freedom of religion is important — it's one of our fundamental values. That's why it's protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution. That freedom doesn't give taxpayer-funded child welfare agencies the right to deny loving homes to children in government care just because the prospective parents do not share the agency's religious beliefs.

FAIRNESS
WEST VIRGINIA

30%

of kids in foster care are LGBTQ

Source: 2019 study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics

70%

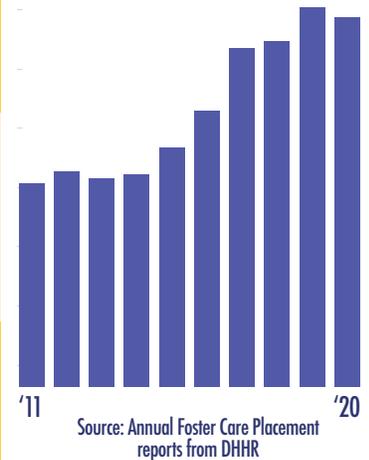
of Americans oppose laws like SB 13

Source: Oct. 2020 polling from the Public Religion Research Institute

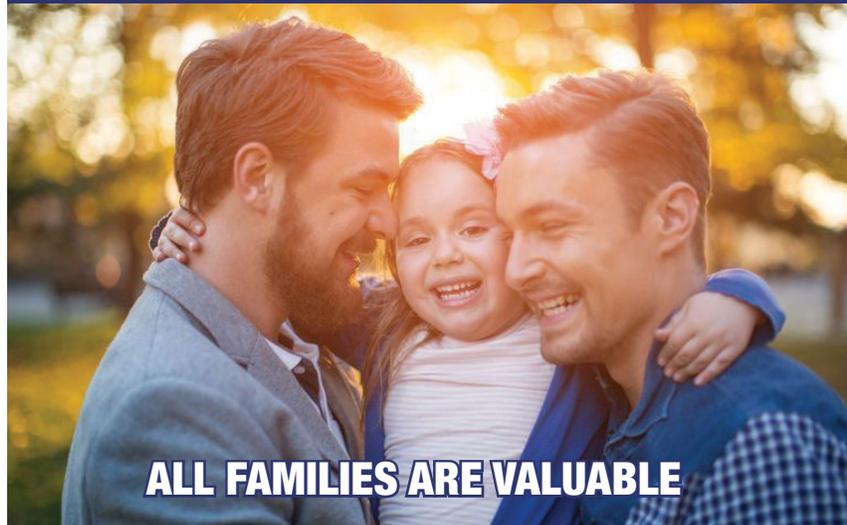
Foster care numbers keep going up...

From 2011-20, there was a 69% increase of kids placed in the system

Turning away LGBTQ parents will only keep kids in the system.



Our problem isn't a shortage of agencies.
It's a shortage of families.



ALL FAMILIES ARE VALUABLE