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Written Testimony of Opposition to HB 4966

May 13, 2026

With regards to Senate Amendment #1 to House Bill 4966, the Catholic Conference of Illinois has concerns with the process change in the considerations for placement of children and how implementation will occur with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Specifically, the new language being added on lines 6-10 on page 26 of Senate Amendment #1 stating that:

“prospective caregivers or prospective adoptive parents shall expressly commit that they will comply with Sections 6a, 7, 7.29, and 7.30 and the Department shall document this in the child’s case file”

along with the following new language on lines 11-15 that provides that:

“the Department shall not place a child without determining, as part of the Department’s placement suitability analysis, that the prospective caregivers or prospective adoptive parents have the capacity to meet the child’s specific needs for safety, well-being and supportive care”

This new language creates concern that may result in less children being placed with relatives, as DCFS is under no obligation to place a child with a relative caregiver if that relative cannot comply with Sections 7.29 and Section 7.30. These Sections require a relative caregiver to comply with facilitating an abortion or participating in gender affirming care if the child requests this. If the relative does not comply, we fear DCFS will place with a non-relative, thus violating the goal of keeping families together. This gives the Department too much discretion.

In addition, our overarching concern with this bill is that it places the state in a position to determine what services a child under care receives even if the custodial parent and the relative caregiver disagree. For example, if there is a child in Illinois placed out of state and the custodial parent and the relative caregiver do not consent to a service for a child to receive care contrary to their moral beliefs, the interests of the state and the child override those of the family.