



Voice for Adoption
SPEAKING OUT FOR OUR NATION'S WAITING CHILDREN

THE DONALDSON
ADOPTION INSTITUTE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The undersigned non-partisan, non-profit organizations are dedicated to ensuring safety, permanency and well-being for children and families touched by the child welfare system, including improved policies and programs that expedite permanency for foster children waiting to be adopted. As such, we are in opposition to HB 3864, which relates to “protection of the rights of conscience for child welfare services providers”.

This letter explains our opposition to this bill by providing the state of professional knowledge on the critical need for the largest possible pool of qualified parents to adopt children languishing in the child welfare system, and the harm to children that results from excluding any single qualified class of parents (such as gay and lesbian couples) from that pool. The Donaldson Adoption Institute has conducted extensive studies on this issue, which can be found at [Adoption by Gays and Lesbians publications page](#).

A quarter century of research has found that children raised by lesbian and gay parents fare well – on par with those reared by heterosexual parents. Major professional groups, including the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association, as well as national and state child welfare organizations, overwhelmingly support adoptions by qualified same-sex parents.

According to the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, same-sex couples raising children are [four times more likely](#) than their different-sex counterparts to be raising an adopted child. More than 16,000 same-sex couples are raising an estimated 22,000 adopted children throughout the United States. Studies have also documented that lesbian and gay adults are willing to adopt the very children most in need of homes and those who wait in temporary foster care the longest, those who are older and who may have special needs; these families also do so at a higher rate than heterosexual adults.

In Texas alone, the most recent statistics demonstrate that 29,625 children are in foster care with 12,991 children waiting in care for permanent, loving families. Nationally, over 23,000 children aged out of foster care in 2013 without families. The outcomes facing youth who exit foster care on their own, rather than to a family, are staggering; these young people are more likely to flounder in society with higher rates of homelessness and unemployment compared to their peers who are adopted. These numbers and outcomes illustrate the critical need for the largest possible pool of qualified parents to adopt children from Texas’ child welfare system. Allowing agencies that serve waiting children to discriminate against prospective qualified parents undermines the prospects of Texas’ children being placed with permanent, loving families.

We urge you to examine the research that demonstrates if we truly wish to act in good conscience towards children waiting for permanent families, we must not exclude qualified and eager prospective foster and adoptive parents. Foster and adoptive parent applicants should be judged based on their qualifications, not their

sexual orientation or gender identity. Enshrining discrimination into law, on the other hand, will undermine the safety and well-being of Texas' children. We urge you to stop this bill from advancing.

Thank you for your attention to ensuring Texas' waiting children are placed with stable, loving families.

Sincerely,

April Dinwoodie, Chief Executive, The Donaldson Adoption Institute

Nicole Dobbins, Executive Director, Voice for Adoption

Carolina Bradpiece, Executive Director, North American Council on Adoptable Children