

ASSEMBLY COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2433

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 16, 1996

The Assembly Community Services Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2433.

This bill establishes a two-year "Fost-Adopt Demonstration Program for Boarder Babies and Children" in the Division of Youth and Family Services in the Department of Human Services. This program shall: create more placement options for boarder babies and boarder children; enhance permanency services for infants and children who are not likely to return home or be placed with a relative; reduce the need for interim placements by creating more stable placement options; and given intensive services to ensure a permanent plan for a boarder baby or child, reduce the length of time in temporary foster care.

The Director of the Division of Youth and Family Services is authorized to develop the demonstration program which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. Development of fost-adopt families from already approved foster or adoptive homes or recruited specifically for this program;
- b. Commitment by a fost-adopt family to accept an infant or child on a foster care basis but agree to adopt the infant or child if the infant or child becomes available for adoption;
- c. Establishment of criteria to determine which infants and children can be placed in fost-adopt homes;
- d. Provision of intensified services to the biological parent to effect family reunification;
- e. Provision of intensive services to the adoptive parents; and
- f. Development of concurrence within the legal community, including family court judges, law guardians and deputy attorney generals regarding aggressive, time-limited permanency planning which would lead to guardianship litigation and adoption finalization.

Within six months of the expiration of this bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is required to report to the Governor and the Legislature on the effectiveness of the program and present recommendations for expanding the program Statewide, as appropriate.

This bill includes a \$90,000 appropriation to the department from the General Fund.