Email to: speakup.thenewroadproject@gmail.com

Subject Line: In Support of HB1540 Expansion of the Foster Care Bill of Rights

Dear Chairman Long and Fellow Committee Members,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I’m from (town). I am a (parent, teacher, social worker, concerned citizen, nurse, etc.) who is concerned about the treatment of minors inside of the child protection system. (*Optional- you can expand on your expertise or experience here if you want.)*

All children who interact with this system do so without choice and at very vulnerable times in their lives. As such, it is vital that as a society we assign and ensure baseline rights to these children, like we do to most vulnerable classes of people. This will best assure that when they exit the system they are doing so better off than when they entered it, which is the ultimate goal of child protection. I am writing to ask you to support HB 1540 which will expand the purview of the bipartisan foster care bill of rights that already exists in statute as of 2018.

Adopting this amendment through expansion will:

1.Provide that all clients of DCYF are granted the same rights as those provided under current law to foster care clients. Prior to entering foster care, all children first encounter the system through the assessment process, which can last for months. Further, it often takes multiple assessments before a child is removed from their home and placed in care, or a different outcome is determined. Children should have the provision of the rights established in this amendment from their first contact with DCYF or any of its providers to maximize positive outcomes and minimize harm.

2. Make it clear that these rights establish a mandatory standard of care which is based on the “best interests of the child” standard and that all decisions made on behalf of a child are done so using an approach that will minimize further trauma to a child.

3. Mandate that DCYF personnel and their contracted agents and providers are held accountable for protecting these rights.

4.  Provide that notice of these rights be provided to all DCYF clients, that these rights will be periodically reviewed with clients, and establish a procedure for redress if a client feels those rights have not been adhered to.

*(These are the basic talking point and message we want to send about why this bill is important. HOWEVER, you are welcome to expand on this, focus on just one, add your own story which is frequently helpful, add other parts of the bill that are important to you, etc. OR you can just submit as is and sign off after number 4).*

Thank you for prioritizing New Hampshire’s children through your consideration of support for HB1540.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

Town and County

Phone, if you wish