

Reps. Spade, Ball, Barnett, Lisa Brown, Terry Brown, Byrnes, Constan, Gonzales, Griffin, Hansen, Hildenbrand, Robert Jones, Kowall, Kurtz, LeBlanc, Liss, Lori, Marleau, Mayes, Neumann, Polidori, Proos, Rogers, Schuitmaker, Scripps, Slavens, Smith, Stanley, Tyler and Valentine offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 274.

A resolution to declare May 2010 as Foster Care Month in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, National Foster Care Month provides an opportunity to recognize the important role that foster care parents, workers, and advocates have in the lives of children in the foster care system throughout the United States; and

Whereas, There is nothing more precious to our state than the healthy growth and development of our youth, who will determine the future direction of our state; and

Whereas, The state of Michigan, communities and local governments should be encouraged to invest available resources on reunification services and post-permanency supports designed to allow more children in the foster care system to safely return to their biological parents, or find permanent placements through adoption or guardianship; and

Whereas, There are approximately 16,000 children in Michigan's foster care system through no fault of their own and of those children in foster care, more than 4,000 are available for adoption; and

Whereas, The primary goal of the foster care system is to ensure the safety and well-being of children, while working to provide foster children with a permanent, safe, and loving home; and

Whereas, Foster parents give children the opportunity to live with families and make lasting attachments instead of living in institutions where they face a reduced chance for permanency; and

Whereas, In 2008, the number of children who were in foster care for more than 24 months was over 1,000; and

Whereas, Children 'aging out' of the foster care system lack the security of a biological or adoptive family to fall back on when struggling to secure affordable housing, obtain health insurance, pursue higher education and acquire adequate employment; and

Whereas, Michigan continues to expand and implement its kinship care model to provide protection and nurturing relative care of children who must be removed from their homes; and

Whereas, Michigan's foster care system is charged with the responsibility to ensure that child welfare practices conform to federal standards and benefit the lives of children and families; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That members of this legislative body declare May 2010 as Foster Care Month in the state of Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That the members of this legislative body acknowledge the needs of children in our state's foster care system, honor the commitment and dedication of those individuals who work tirelessly to provide assistance and services to children in the foster care system; and recognize the need to continue work to improve the outcomes of all children in the foster care system through state programs that are designed to help children in the foster care system reunite with their biological parents and, when children are unable to return to their biological parents, to find them a permanent, safe, and loving home.