



ROBIN J. VOS

SPEAKER OF THE WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Speaker Vos Creates Task Force on Foster Care

Madison...Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) is announcing the formation of the Task Force on Foster Care. The bipartisan group of legislators is tasked with developing ideas to improve the child welfare system that provides out-of-home care for more than seven thousand children in Wisconsin. The goal is to help end the multi-generational cycle of government dependence by strengthening community partnerships, reducing barriers within the system, and updating programs to meet the changing needs of parents, children and communities involved.

"We need to find ways to better serve our most vulnerable citizens who, at no fault of their own, are put in challenging circumstances," said Speaker Vos. "We want every child in Wisconsin to become a productive citizen and be given every opportunity to succeed in life. This includes the thousands of children in the foster care system."

The Department of Children and Families reports 7,168 children were in out-of-home care (OHC) in December 2015, which is an increase from the previous year. Nationally, the increase in children in foster care is being called alarming with experts attributing the rise to the opioid epidemic.

Most children spend almost a year in the program. The largest age group in OHC was children between 2-4 years old; the second largest was 14-16 year olds. One of the major issues that needs to be addressed is what to do to help children leaving the system when they age-out without a permanent family. Unfortunately, studies show that one in five will become homeless after age 18 and only half will be employed by age 24. Few finish high school or go to college; about 60 percent of boys and half of girls are incarcerated at some point in their life.

"The bipartisan task force will travel the state to get input from local experts and individuals involved with foster care and community programs," said Speaker Vos. "I'm asking the bipartisan task force to make recommends before the end of the session."

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Speaker Vos would like to thank the following groups for their input on the formation of the task force: Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies (WAFCA), Lutheran Social Services, Wisconsin Children's Hospital, and Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.

Members of Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care

Rep. Pat Snyder – Co-Chair
Democratic Nominee – Co-Chair
Rep. Joan Ballweg
Rep. Jessie Rodriguez
Rep. Adam Neylon
Rep. Todd Novak
Rep. Joel Kitchens
Rep. Terry Katsma
Rep. Treig Pronschinske
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