

CHAPTER 2016-73

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 860

An act relating to foster families; creating s. 683.333, F.S.; designating the second week of February of each year as “Foster Family Appreciation Week”; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the family is the very foundation of our communities, state, and country, and

WHEREAS, parents serve as a child’s primary source of love, attachment, identity, self-esteem, and support, and

WHEREAS, foster parents open their homes and hearts to children whose families are in crisis and play a vital role in helping children heal, reconnect, grow, and flourish, and

WHEREAS, foster parents are professional parents and full partners in the commitment to ensuring the well-being of children in foster care, and

WHEREAS, many of the children adopted in this state have been provided a permanent home by their foster parents, and

WHEREAS, foster parents play a critical role in the Quality Parenting Initiative, which places a priority on quality parenting, putting the needs of children first, advocating for children in their care, and supporting and mentoring birth families, and

WHEREAS, in this state, more than 6,000 children and youth in foster care have a safe, secure, and stable family foster home, and

WHEREAS, compassionate individuals, faith-based communities, and public and private organizations work to increase public awareness of the enduring and valuable contributions of foster parents and the needs of children in foster care, and

WHEREAS, those families who are able to serve as foster parents should be wholeheartedly encouraged to do so, and

WHEREAS, the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection, the Legislature, the Department of Children and Families, community-based care lead agencies, the guardian ad litem program, the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, and state and local agencies and organizations all provide support for foster families, and

WHEREAS, to continue to commend and support foster families in the years ahead, the people of this state are called upon to recognize the positive impact that foster parents have on children in foster care and to consider

providing a loving, supportive home for children in need by becoming foster parents, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 683.333, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

683.333 Foster Family Appreciation Week.—

(1) The second week of February of each year is designated as “Foster Family Appreciation Week” to recognize the enduring and invaluable contributions that foster parents provide to the children in their care and, thus, to the future of this state.

(2) The Department of Children and Families, local governments, and other agencies are encouraged to sponsor events to promote awareness of the contributions made by foster families to the vitality of the state.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor March 23, 2016.

Filed in Office Secretary of State March 23, 2016.