



# House panel oks Feigenholtz plan placing brothers, sisters in same foster home

David Ormsby

Springfield Political Buzz Examiner

**(Springfield, IL) – March 2, 2012.** An Illinois House panel yesterday provided bi-partisan support to a plan that in cases of child abuse and neglect where children are placed in foster care that Illinois' child protection agency would seek as a priority to place brothers and sisters in the same foster home.

"In cases of child abuse and neglect, children are separated from the offending parent, but routinely brothers and sisters are separated from each other, breaking often the most healthy family relationship in their lives," said State Rep. **Sara Feigenholtz** (D-Chicago), the sponsor of the measure, [House Bill 5592](#).

*"This bill aims to preserve healthy, loving relationships between brothers and sisters," Feigenholtz said.*

The House Adoption Reform [Committee](#), which Feigenholtz chairs, [voted 7-0](#) for the legislation which requires the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to place siblings together unless that placement would not be in each child's best interest.

"Where placement of brothers and sisters in the same foster home makes sense, the bill says DCFS will make every effort to preserve the siblings' relationship," said Feigenholtz.

The legislation, which is supported by DCFS, requires that the Illinois juvenile court system shall review regularly plans for maintaining sibling contact.

Additionally, Feigenholtz's plan establishes a voluntary "sibling contact agreement" for adoptive parents and brothers and sisters who want continued contact once a child leaves DCFS care through adoption or who returns home.

"After a child leaves state guardianship, for example, if a brother is adopted but his sister is not, there will be a voluntary plan to preserve relationship between the adoptive parents and the guardians of the other sibling," said Feigenholtz.

The legislation has drawn the support of Illinois' leading child welfare advocacy group.

"This legislation strikes the right balance between a foster parent or an adoptive parent providing the best possible care for an abused and neglected child while preserving the relationship of siblings for whom that relation matters," said **Marge Berglind**, President & CEO of the Child Care Association of Illinois.

Feigenholtz's bill now moves to the full House for consideration.

Continue reading on Examiner.com [House panel oks Feigenholtz plan placing brothers, sisters in same foster home - Chicago Political Buzz | Examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com/political-buzz-in-chicago/house-panel-oks-feigenholtz-plan-placing-brothers-sisters-same-foster-home#ixzz1nz6Ebl9G) <http://www.examiner.com/political-buzz-in-chicago/house-panel-oks-feigenholtz-plan-placing-brothers-sisters-same-foster-home#ixzz1nz6Ebl9G>