

# Rep. Brooks: Helps to advance improvement to 'Foster Forward'

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Madison, WI – Yesterday, Rep. Ed Brooks (R-Reedsburg), along with the rest of the Wisconsin State Assembly, helped to advance thirteen bills known collectively, as “Foster Forward.” The package of bills was the result of the work from the Speaker’s Task Force on Foster Care. The Task Force held six public hearings around the state of Wisconsin to learn more about the challenges stakeholders face in the foster care system and what opportunities there may be for legislators to make the system better.

Proposals were then drafted as a direct reflection of the input received. The bills aim to better support families, improve the child welfare system, and provide additional resources for foster children.

In 2016, the Department of Children and Families reported that nearly 7,500 children were living outside of their homes, up 4% from 2015. In the neighborhoods of the 50th Assembly District, over 100 children were in the foster system in 2015 (38 children in Juneau County, 42 children in Sauk County, and 25 children in Richland County). Out of home placements have increased almost 20% over the past six years and, sadly, it appears that this trend is likely to continue. More information from the out of care annual reports can be found here:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/reports>.

“It is encouraging to know that even though there are kids out there that need to be

in the child welfare system, there are great people doing great work to ensure those kids have positive outcomes. I'm especially proud that we were able to listen to stakeholders, create proposals, and pass legislation that will have a positive impact on the lives of these citizens in Wisconsin," said Rep. Brooks.

If you are interested in learning about how to become a foster parent you can visit the Department of Children and Families website:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/fostercare/become>.