

Rep. Kitchens: Foster Forward legislative package moves through Assembly

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MADISON—State Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) released the following statement after the passage of his bills in the Foster Forward legislative package on the floor of the Assembly today:

“I was delighted to see the entire Foster Forward legislative package move forward through the Assembly today, especially my bills AB 775 and AB 777. AB 775 eliminates the look-ahead period for TPR (termination of parental rights) and AB 777 provides tuition remission for foster youths.”

AB 775 removes the 9 month look-ahead element to involuntary termination of parental rights in a CHIPS proceeding. This will streamline the permanency process for a child and allow for an expedited adoption process. AB 777 provides former foster children with free tuition at all UW-System schools and technical colleges. Many foster families do not have the resources to ensure college for their foster children and this bill will provide them with immeasurable opportunities.

“These bills addressed some of the biggest concerns that we heard time and again as we traveled the state for our public hearings. I found it incredibly valuable to hear from the people who work in the child welfare system every single day. As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families, I’ve gained a new appreciation for the work these individuals do and the tremendous value they provide to our state’s children. I was honored to serve on the Speaker’s Task Force on Foster Care and be able to engage with the social workers, case managers,

foster parents and volunteers who spend their time working to improve the lives of children in the system.”

“I was especially proud to serve on this task force due to its bipartisan nature. The children of our state are best served when we all work together and co-chairs Representative Snyder (R-Schofield) and Representative Doyle (D- Onalaska) did a wonderful job in leading a joint effort to improve our child welfare system and the lives of Wisconsin’s foster children.”