

HB 657

2016

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to foster families; creating s.
3 683.333, F.S.; designating the second week of February
4 of each year as "Foster Family Appreciation Week";
5 providing an effective date.

6
7 WHEREAS, the family is the very foundation of our
8 communities, state, and country, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

40 WHEREAS, to continue to commend and support foster families
 41 in the years ahead, the people of this state are called upon to
 42 recognize the positive impact that foster parents have on
 43 children in foster care and to consider providing a loving,
 44 supportive home for children in need by becoming foster parents,
 45 NOW, THEREFORE,

46

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

48

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

51 683.333 Foster Family Appreciation Week.-

52 (1) The second week of February of each year, beginning in

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53 2016, is designated as "Foster Family Appreciation Week" to
54 recognize the enduring and invaluable contributions that foster
55 parents provide to the children in their care and, thus, to the
56 future of this state.

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

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