

Senate File 473 - Reprinted

SENATE FILE 473
BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES

(SUCCESSOR TO SF 236)

(As Amended and Passed by the Senate March 25, 2025)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to certain sincerely held religious or moral
2 beliefs of child foster care providers and prospective
3 adoptive parents.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 237.10, Code 2025, is amended by adding
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 9A. *a.* The department shall not do any of
4 the following:

5 (1) Require an individual licensee to affirm, accept,
6 or support a policy related to sexual orientation or gender
7 identity that conflicts with the person's sincerely held
8 religious or moral beliefs.

9 (2) Preclude a person from providing child foster care as an
10 individual licensee based, in whole or in part, on the person's
11 sincerely held religious or moral beliefs related to sexual
12 orientation or gender identity, including but not limited to
13 the person's intent to guide, instruct, or raise a child in a
14 manner consistent with the person's sincerely held religious
15 or moral beliefs.

16 *b.* The department, and the department's designees, shall not
17 adopt a standard, policy, or rule that precludes an individual
18 licensee from being considered as a child's child foster care
19 provider based, in whole or in part, on the person's sincerely
20 held religious or moral beliefs related to sexual orientation
21 or gender identity.

22 *c.* This subsection shall not be interpreted to preclude
23 the department, or the department's designee, from taking
24 into account the sincerely held moral and religious beliefs,
25 including but not limited to the sincerely held moral and
26 religious beliefs related to sexual orientation and gender
27 identity, of a child and the child's family of origin as
28 compared to the sincerely held moral and religious beliefs of a
29 potential child foster care provider when determining the most
30 appropriate placement for the child consistent with the best
31 interests of the child.

32 *d.* (1) A current or prospective child foster care provider
33 may bring an action asserting a violation of this subsection.
34 A court may provide the current or prospective child foster
35 care provider injunctive relief, declaratory relief, or other

1 relief as the court deems appropriate, and may award reasonable
2 attorney fees and costs.

3 (2) The attorney general may bring an action to enforce this
4 subsection.

5 *e.* For purposes of this subsection, "*gender identity*" means
6 the same as defined in section 279.78, and "*sexual orientation*"
7 means the same as defined in section 216.2.

8 Sec. 2. Section 600.7A, Code 2025, is amended to read as
9 follows:

10 **600.7A Adoption services provided by or through the**
11 **department — selection of adoptive parent criteria.**

12 1. The department shall adopt rules which provide that if
13 adoption services are provided by or through the department,
14 notwithstanding any other selection of adoptive parent
15 criteria, the overriding criterion shall be a preference for
16 placing a child in a stable home environment as expeditiously
17 as possible.

18 2. a. The department shall not do any of the following:

19 (1) Require a prospective adoptive parent to affirm,
20 accept, or support a policy related to sexual orientation or
21 gender identity that conflicts with the person's sincerely held
22 religious or moral beliefs.

23 (2) Preclude a person from being qualified as a prospective
24 adoptive parent based, in whole or in part, on the person's
25 sincerely held religious or moral beliefs related to sexual
26 orientation or gender identity, including but not limited to
27 the person's intent to guide, instruct, or raise a child in a
28 manner consistent with the person's sincerely held religious
29 or moral beliefs.

30 b. The department, and the department's designees, shall
31 not adopt a standard, policy, or rule that precludes a person
32 from being considered as a child's prospective adoptive parent
33 based, in whole or in part, on the person's sincerely held
34 religious or moral beliefs related to sexual orientation or
35 gender identity.

1 c. This subsection shall not be interpreted to preclude
2 the department from taking into account the sincerely held
3 moral and religious beliefs, including sincerely held moral
4 and religious beliefs related to sexual orientation and gender
5 identity, of a child and the child's family of origin as
6 compared to the sincerely held moral and religious beliefs
7 of a prospective adoptive parent when determining the most
8 appropriate placement for the child consistent with the best
9 interests of the child.

10 d. (1) A prospective adoptive parent may bring an action
11 asserting a violation of this subsection. A court may provide
12 a prospective adoptive parent injunctive relief, declaratory
13 relief, or other relief as the court deems appropriate, and may
14 award reasonable attorney fees and costs.

15 (2) The attorney general may bring an action to enforce this
16 subsection.

17 e. For purposes of this subsection, "gender identity" means
18 the same as defined in section 279.78, and "sexual orientation"
19 means the same as defined in section 216.2.