SENATE FILE 473
BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

(SUCCESSOR TO SF 236)

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

_____ = New Language by the Senate

A BILL FOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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