

# Senate Children and Family Law Committee

*Joshua Schauer 271-3077*

**HB 178**, relative to foster parent representation of foster children with disabilities.

**Hearing Date:** April 24, 2025

**Time Opened:** 9:32 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 9:38 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Abbas, Sullivan and Long

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill deletes erroneously inserted language regarding child representation to clarify the statute's meaning.

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**Sponsors:**

Rep. N. Murphy

Rep. Petrigno

Rep. Levesque

Rep. Selig

Rep. M. Pearson

Rep. Elberger

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Ricciardi

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator Donovan Fenton, Representative Nancy Murphy, Representative Jay Markell, Mariellen MacKay, Janet Lucas, Armand Peters, Dawn McKinney

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Representative Nancy Murphy, Hillsborough – District 12**

- Representative Murphy introduced the bill and explained this bill would address the statute for the appointment of foster children by removing confusing and redundant language.
- She filed this bill at the request of a constituent who found the language in this statute unclear and cited RSA 186-C, Section 14 A, paragraph 1 as the language that would be amended to provide clarity.
- She said that this legislation has no substantive policy changes, it merely removes redundant language to better clarify the statute's meaning.
- She stated that HB178 removes only 16 words that are unnecessary and will make the statute more clarifying.

**Representative Jay Markell, Rockingham – District 18**

- Representative Markell presented questions about the rights of foster parents over their foster children and potential conflicts between foster and biological parental rights.
- He added that this bill may conflict with parental rights and could be misinterpreted to take parental rights away from a foster child’s biological parents.

**Senator Abbas** asked if that issue should be introduced as a stand-alone bill rather than an amendment

**Representative Markell** agreed that it could.

**Senator Sullivan** reads the legislation as “foster parents may be granted parental rights” and she believed that it was covered under that language that the parents would forego their rights if they were not in the “picture”.

**Representative Markell** was worried that it was not clear in the piece of legislation.

**Senator Sullivan** reiterated that it does not mention the exclusion of the parents and wanted some clarification.

**Representative Markell** affirmed that it says they “may have the right”.

**Senator Long** stated he agreed with Senator Abbas that Rep. Markell’s concern should be a stand-alone bill and that it would only apply if students were moving out of their school district.