

CHAPTER 625

(Senate Bill 559)

AN ACT concerning

Adoption - Foster Parents

FOR the purpose of providing that a foster parent has a right to adopt a foster child that has been in the foster parent's care; ~~repealing the consent requirement in an independent adoption; requiring a court to consider that a child has been in foster care and certain conditions when passing on a petition for adoption~~ altering the priority that a local social services agency shall consider in developing a permanent plan for a child in foster care to give foster parents priority for consideration for adoption of a child in the foster parent's care; stating a certain priority of the type of placement for a child under foster care; providing for a timely hearing for a foster parent wishing to contest an agency's decision; and generally relating to the adoption by a foster parent of a foster child in the foster parent's care.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article - Family Law  
~~Section 5-309, 5-312, 5-313(c), and 5-316~~ Section 5-525  
 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 (1984 Replacement Volume and 1986 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, The General Assembly declares that, if a local Department of Social Services determines that a person is qualified to be a foster parent, the foster parent should be considered as possible adoptive parents when it is decided adoption is in the best interests of the child.

WHEREAS, Foster parents have had difficulty when trying to adopt foster children that have been in their care for a long period of time;

~~WHEREAS, Because the continuity of the care of a child is essential for the development of that child, adoption by the foster parents should be considered to be in the best interests of the child; now, therefore,~~

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Family Law