

**SENATE BILL NO. 2080  
with House Amendments  
SENATE BILL NO. 2080**

Introduced by

Human Services Committee

(At the request of the Department of Health and Human Services)

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact subsections 2 and 3 of section 14-15-11 and section  
2 27-20.3-24 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to a licensed child-placing agency  
3 investigation and adoptive child placement priority; and to provide a contingent effective date.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 2 of section 14-15-11 of the North Dakota Century  
6 Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

7 2. An investigation must be made by a licensed child-placing agency to inquire into the  
8 conditions and antecedents of a minor sought to be adopted and of the petitioner for  
9 the purpose of ascertaining whether the adoptive home is a suitable home for the  
10 minor and whether the proposed adoption is in the best interest of the minor. The  
11 licensed child-placing agency shall obtain and consider the foster care assessment of  
12 an applicant who is also a licensed, certified, or approved family foster home for  
13 children in the manner prescribed by the department. An adoptive home is suitable if,  
14 in the manner prescribed by the department, the petitioner is licensed or approved  
15 under section 50-11-01 to furnish foster care for children.

16 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 3 of section 14-15-11 of the North Dakota Century  
17 Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

18 3. A written report of the investigation, which may include the petitioner's foster care  
19 assessment to demonstrate the suitability of the adoptive home, must be filed with the  
20 court by the investigator before the petition is heard.

21 **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-20.3-24 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
22 amended and reenacted as follows:

1       **27-20.3-24. Disposition upon termination of parental rights.**

2       1. If, upon entering an order terminating the parental rights of a parent, there is no parent  
3       having parental rights, the court shall:

4       a. Commit the child to the custody of the human service zone director or a licensed  
5       child-placing agency willing to accept custody for the purpose of placing the child  
6       for adoption or, in the absence of such an agreement, in a foster home;

7       b. Appoint a fit and willing relative or other appropriate individual as the child's legal  
8       guardian; or

9       c. Establish some other planned permanent living arrangement.

10      2. The custodian has the rights of a legal custodian and authority to consent to the child's  
11      adoption, marriage, enlistment in the armed forces of the United States, and surgical  
12      and other medical treatment.

13      3. If the child is not placed for adoption within twelve months after the date of the order  
14      and a legal guardianship or other planned permanent living arrangement for the child  
15      has not been established by a court of competent jurisdiction, the child must be  
16      returned to the court issuing the original termination order for entry of further orders for  
17      the care, custody, and control of the child.

18      4. Unless sections 27-20.2-15 and 27-20.3-19 or the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of  
19      1978 [25 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.] applies, and if after conducting a diligent search, a fit  
20      and willing relative interested in adoption is not located, upon termination of parental  
21      rights, a human service zone director or licensed child-placing agency that places a  
22      child for adoption under subdivision a of subsection 1, shall give adoptive placement  
23      priority to a foster care provider interested in adopting the child, if the foster care  
24      provider provided foster care to the child:

25      a. For six months or longer leading up to the termination of parental rights;

26      b. Since the child's birth or since the child was less than one year old; or

27      c. With the intention of adopting the child.

28      **SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-20.3-24 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
29      amended and reenacted as follows:

1       **27-20.3-24. Disposition upon termination of parental rights.**

2       1. If, upon entering an order terminating the parental rights of a parent, there is no parent  
3       having parental rights, the court shall:

4       a. Commit the child to the custody of the human service zone director or a licensed  
5       child-placing agency willing to accept custody for the purpose of placing the child  
6       for adoption or, in the absence of such an agreement, in a foster home;

7       b. Appoint a fit and willing relative or other appropriate individual as the child's legal  
8       guardian; or

9       c. Establish some other planned permanent living arrangement.

10      2. The custodian has the rights of a legal custodian and authority to consent to the child's  
11      adoption, marriage, enlistment in the armed forces of the United States, and surgical  
12      and other medical treatment.

13      3. If the child is not placed for adoption within twelve months after the date of the order  
14      and a legal guardianship or other planned permanent living arrangement for the child  
15      has not been established by a court of competent jurisdiction, the child must be  
16      returned to the court issuing the original termination order for entry of further orders for  
17      the care, custody, and control of the child.

18      4. Unless sections 27-20.2-15, 27-20.3-19, 27-20.3-19.1, 27-20.3-19.2, 27-20.3-19.3,  
19      27-20.3-19.4, and 27-20.3-19.5 or the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978  
20      [25 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.] applies, and if after conducting a diligent search, a fit and  
21      willing relative interested in adoption is not located, upon termination of parental rights,  
22      a human service zone director or licensed child-placing agency that places a child for  
23      adoption under subdivision a of subsection 1, shall give adoptive placement priority to  
24      a foster care provider interested in adopting the child, if the foster care provider  
25      provided foster care to the child:

26      a. For six months or longer leading up to the termination of parental rights;

27      b. Since the child's birth or since the child was less than one year old; or

28      c. With the intention of adopting the child.

29      **SECTION 5. CONTINGENT EFFECTIVE DATE.** Section 4 of this Act becomes effective at  
30      the time provided in House Bill No. 1536 if sections 27-20.3-19.1, 27-20.3-19.2, 27-20.3-19.3,

Sixty-eighth  
Legislative Assembly

- 1 27-20.3-19.4, and 27-20.3-19.5 as created by House Bill No. 1536 are approved by the
- 2 sixty-eighth legislative assembly.