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### **Subsidies Are Crucial For The Adoption Of Children In Foster Care, says Children's Rights**

A survey of adoptive parents released today by Children's Rights shows the importance of adoption subsidies in ensuring that children in foster care can be adopted and grow up in permanent families. Adoption subsidies assist parents with the costs of raising children with special needs who are adopted from foster care. The survey of 242 parents from six states comes at a time when many states have tightened their eligibility criteria for adoption assistance in an apparent effort to trim state budgets.

"Adequate adoption subsidies are critical to parents' ability to adopt vulnerable children from foster care," said Julie Farber, Children's Rights' director of policy. "Attempts by states to restrict access to adoption subsidies are short-sighted since cost analyses show that keeping children in foster care is more costly than providing adoption subsidies. Providing adequate adoption subsidies can help end the cycle of multiple foster home placements, which, for too many children can lead to bad long-term life outcomes such as unemployment, incarceration or homelessness."

Adoption subsidies assist parents with the costs of raising children with special needs, and the survey found that 81% of those asked considered the payments important in their decision to adopt and 58% said they could not have adopted without them.

"Adoption subsidies are a crucial element to supporting children with special needs who are adopted from the public child welfare system," said Jeanette Wiedemeier Bower of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC). In the last five years, 26 states have tightened their criteria for subsidies. "Any decrease or restriction in assistance for these young people represents a set back in finding a permanent, loving home."

"Fair adoption subsidies help get vulnerable children into permanent homes," said Farber. "Encouraging the adoption of children in foster care is good child welfare policy and good financial policy. The current trend to restrict the availability of adoption subsidies must be reversed."

Adoptive and prospective adoptive parents, caring for 670 adoptive and pre-adoptive children, were surveyed in Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, and Texas. Children's Rights conducted the survey in partnership with NACAC and the National Foster Parent Association.

A recent lawsuit by Children's Rights challenged a Missouri law that would have restricted access to adoption subsidies. In May 2006, the court ruled in favor of Children's Rights and banned the law from taking effect, finding that it was unconstitutional and violated federal law.

Children's Rights is a national organization advocating on behalf of abused and neglected children in the U.S. Since 1995, the organization has used legal action and policy initiatives to create lasting improvements in child protection, foster care and adoption.