

STATE OF ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, thanks to thousands of adoptive parents across the state, 16,265 children have found permanent loving homes over the last decade, including 1,468 children in the last year alone; and,

WHEREAS, all children need and deserve the love, nurturing, and sense of security that can only come from being a part of a loving, permanent family; and,

WHEREAS, adoption provides a unique joy and a special opportunity for individuals, whether or not they are already parents, married, in a civil union, single or divorced, to open their hearts and their homes for the rest of their lives to children; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and its nonprofit partners strive to reunify children with their birth families; but when that simply is not possible, they are equally committed to ensuring every child has the safe, loving family they deserve and need to reach their fullest potential; and,

WHEREAS, Illinois has made great strides in recent years in strengthening and improving the child welfare system: reducing the number of children in temporary substitute care from 52,000 to 15,000; establishing a Bill of Rights for both birth parents and adoptive parents; and strengthening licensing requirements for adoption agencies to prevent the exploitation of birth parents, adoptive parents and children; and,

WHEREAS, all of the progress in recent years would not have been possible without champions like State Representative Sara Feigenholtz, an adoptee herself, and State Representative Naomi Jakobsson, an adoptive parent and former foster parent, as well as child advocates including: Child Care Association of Illinois; Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association; Illinois Adoption Advisory Council; Illinois Statewide Youth Advisory Board; Chicago Bar Association; Loyola ChildLaw Clinic of Loyola University; and many child welfare agencies, adoptive parent groups and individuals across the state; and,

WHEREAS, together we are committed to improving the child welfare system even further, especially to reducing the length of time children remain in temporary foster care, where Illinois ranks 46th in the nation according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and,

WHEREAS, currently there are 1,973 children awaiting adoption across the state, of all ages, backgrounds and needs; and,

THEREFORE, I, Pat Quinn, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim November 2013 as **ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH** in Illinois, and do hereby encourage all Illinoisans to express their gratitude to the thousands of families across the state that have opened their homes and their hearts to children, and encourage others to consider joining them in making a life-changing difference to children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.



Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,
this TWENTY-FOURTH *day of* OCTOBER, *in*
the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and
THIRTEEN, *and of the State of Illinois,*
one hundred and NINETY-FIFTH.

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SECRETARY OF STATE

Pat Quinn

GOVERNOR