

Feds should pay to help families stay together

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1 Comment

The bill being introduced in the Iowa Legislature encouraging social workers to place siblings together in foster care recognizes how important it is for foster children to stay connected with family ("Keep Siblings Together in Foster Care," Feb. 13).

Nationwide, almost 25 percent of children in foster care are living in the homes of grandparents and other relatives. Research shows that these youth are more likely to live with their brothers and sisters and to stay connected with friends, family, teachers and all that is familiar.

Yet, federal foster-care funds cannot currently be used to support foster children living with relatives who choose to become legal guardians of children. If Congress provided support for these families by subsidizing legal guardianships, an estimated 20,000 children currently in foster care could leave the system for permanent, loving homes with relatives, rather than remaining in an already overloaded foster-care system.

Children in foster care cannot count on a lot of things that other youth take for granted, but they should be able to count on having their brothers and sisters near and on having the families they rely upon supported by government policies.

- Lynhon Stout,
executive director,
Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association,
Ankeny.