

Dear Senator Souza,

11/27/16

I am writing asking you realize the importance of children growing up in safe and loving homes. Hopefully one home and not twenty. A home with someone that loves them and wants them. I am Marie Widmyer(Shropshire) and I grew up in twenty foster homes. I grew up with abuse, neglect and a sense of not belonging, not trusting and wishing that someone loved me enough to give me a forever home. I live with these memories every day. I try to forget and imagine I have a loving mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle or cousin but that was never the case.

What I have are memories of being lonely and scared of what was coming around the corner when I had to pack up my belongings –usually a mere few boxes and move again. Move to a new home of not knowing anyone. Maybe a new school or city.

You may say children are resilient and they can adapt. I am here to say that is asking a lot of their small and forming minds. I have spoken with professionals and they have been supportive of that opinion. I will continue to inform myself in hopes of supporting legislation that children grow up in safe and loving homes that may not include a blood relative.

Even with all that I went through in foster homes I am thankful I did not grow up with my biological mother. In the early years we were attempted to be reunited with her only to suffer more abuse. Eventually becoming wards of the state. I am thankful I was able to see another way of life and that abuse and neglect are not normal.

I wish I had happy thoughts of my childhood, filled with memories of sitting on my mother's lap as she held me in her arms and I knew I would be safe. I didn't have that but I want to make sure that other children can have that opportunity to be with someone that truly cares for them. I don't want kids to be reunited with their biological families at all costs if that is not in the best interest of the child.

I thank you for your time and hope you consider that the laws that you make will effect children and it will effect them for the rest of their lives.

Marie Widmyer