

## S.41/H.2798 An Act Relative to the Re-Homing of Children

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### What Is Re-Homing?

Largely unnoticed until recently, there is a network of adoptive parents who are transferring responsibility of their adopted children through the Internet when an adoption disrupts or dissolves, with no involvement from the appropriate authorities. Children are being transferred to others without the use of the proper channels — no background checks, no home visits, and no official record of the transfer of the child.

It is difficult to know how many youth have been affected by re-homing. According to a recent report by the General Accountability Office, “unregulated child custody transfers are an underground practice that happens outside the purview of the courts and the child welfare system, they are difficult to track, and no federal agency keeps statistics on their occurrence”.

### Why Is This Legislation Needed?

An adoption disrupts or dissolves often because adoptive parents may be unprepared or unaware of the complex mental, emotional, behavioral, or physical health issues facing children who have experienced foster care. We can avoid re-homing by ensuring that those who adopt have all the relevant information and resources available to them. Often, children who are re-homed end up being the victims of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. We need to ensure that this practice is illegal in Massachusetts to safeguard these children who have endured so much in their young lives.

### What Does This Legislation Do?

- This legislation will require the provision of services to adoptive families to avoid adoption disruption and dissolution; additional training specifically geared towards adoption applicants who wish to adopt internationally; and will require adoptive parents to notify their placement agency or DCF if the parent can no longer care for the child.
- The bill also creates penalties for those who advertise the re-homing of a child; those who accept or solicit payment for placing a child; those who take a child in through re-homing; and an adoptive parent and guardian who causes a child to be re-homed.

### Let's Not Fall Behind in Protecting Our Children from this Disturbing Practice

- Several states have passed laws to address the re-homing of children: Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Maine and Wisconsin