2020 Bill Highlights

As of 3/13/2020

HB 61 – Adoption Benefits by Representative Daniels (D - Jacksonville), Representative Roth (R - Palm Beach Gardens)

Companion Bill:  SB 136 - Senator Bean (R - Jacksonville)

Target Population: Servicemembers and veterans seeking to adopt a child; children in the foster system who are eligible for adoption; the Department of Children and Families

Summary: Expands veterans' and servicemembers' eligibility for monetary adoption benefits that are currently provided to state employees; $5,000 is offered for the adoption of a child from the child welfare system and $10,000 is offered for the adoption of a child with special needs from the child welfare system. Servicemembers are qualified to adopt whether or not they are a state qualified adoptive employee and will be eligible to receive these benefits; servicemembers/veterans must be registered as a vendor with the state to access benefits; benefits are not available to independent contractors.

Impact: Throughout the state, there is a disparity between kids awaiting adoption in the child welfare system and the lack of qualified, willing, loving
families to adopt them. Often the adoption process can be long and child care costs are daunting. Currently there is an incentive system in place for state employees to receive a financial stipend if they choose to adopt.

This bill extends the incentives currently offered to state employees to our veterans and servicemembers. This incentive helps give more children the opportunity to achieve permanency in a loving, adoptive home. Our veterans may be living on a limited income and this incentive program allows them the opportunity to adopt and help establish a home for a child.

The Children’s Campaign supports efforts to increase permanency for Florida's children by extending adoption benefits to veterans and servicemembers.

**Effective Date:** Upon becoming a law