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Written Testimony to be Incorporated into the Record on 2SHB 1938

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON 2SHB 1938
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS
Thursday, March 26, 2009
J.A. Cherberg Building, Senate Hearing Rm 1, 3:30 p.m.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on Second Substitute House Bill 1938. My name is Mary Meinig and I am the Director of the Office of the Family & Children's Ombudsman ("OFCO").

2SHB 1938 recognizes the importance of the sibling relationship between children and acknowledges that for children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect, a sibling may have been a critical source of love and support that was otherwise lacking in their home of origin. We support the bill's directive to the court and parties to an open adoption agreement to consider the long-term benefits of maintaining post-adoption contact between siblings who have an established relationship prior to the adoption. We want adoption to be a winning situation for children—gaining a permanent family, rather than the loss of a sibling to whom they are attached.

We think it is important that the adoptive family weigh the potential benefit of continued contact between siblings being separated by adoption. If it is found by the parties to be mutually beneficial, it is our hope that maintaining contact between siblings post-adoption will become a more common practice. At a minimum, 2SHB 1938 ensures that this rewarding possibility does not fall by the wayside merely due to oversight.

Thank you to Representatives Roberts, Kagi, and Angel and other members for their sponsorship of this measure and for this opportunity to provide you with our thoughts on this proposal.