STATE OF ARIZONA

JANICE K. BREWER
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

May 2, 2013

The Honorable Andy Biggs
President of the Senate
Arizona State Senate
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Senate Bill 1108 (foster home licensure; immunizations)

Dear President Biggs,

Today, I signed Senate Bill 1108. As you are aware, there are over 14,000 Arizona children in out-of-home care today. With so many children removed from unsafe and unstable environments, there is a significant shortage of foster homes for these children. While the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) has been diligently recruiting foster families, strengthening retention efforts, and streamlining internal processes, measures like SB1108 provide opportunities to consider innovative solutions.

Senate Bill 1108 prohibits the DES from requiring foster parents to immunize their natural or adoptive children as a condition of foster home licensure. The bill does not, however, guarantee placement of foster children in those homes.

I fully recognize that while we must provide foster children with a safe and loving home, they are only in the State's care temporarily. It is our duty to ensure they remain healthy and safe.

Accordingly, I have directed the DES to develop a placement policy that restricts the placement of young children and infants in homes where the foster parents have not immunized their own children. The DES will continue to place foster children in settings that are most appropriate for each child. Placement decisions must be made with consideration of whether the foster child is fully immunized.

It is my hope that SB1108 will allow more families to care for our foster children. With careful implementation, this legislation has the potential to provide more children with a safe and loving home.

Sincerely,

Janice K. Brewer

Janice K. Brewer
Governor

cc: The Honorable Andy Tobin
The Honorable Nancy Barto

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