



NEWS RELEASE

Louisiana House of Representatives

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Rep. Mike Johnson helps to secure needed raise for foster parents

BATON ROUGE – Thanks to the insistence of Rep. Mike Johnson, R-Pineville, people who open their homes and lives to care for children who have been neglected or abused will now receive extra state funds to help cover their costs of care.

Johnson got the Legislature to approve a nearly 25 percent increase in payments to foster parents, lifting the average from \$15.20 a day to \$19 as of July 1. It is the first increase in the daily rate for boarding children since 200. The payment is in House Bill 1, the state budget bill, and is intended to be a permanent increase.

“There is nothing more important to me than the care of our children. This needed increase is intended to take care of just the basic needs and even though we increased the monthly payment, it’s still not enough,” Johnson said.

The southern average is \$21.68 per day, and the recommended adoption/guardianship subsidy rate is \$17.34 per day.

“Often, families caring for foster children spend much more than the state allotment and a lot of people have more than one child. Fifteen dollars? It costs more to board a pet than we provide to care for our foster children,” he said.

"This increase has been a long time coming," said Department of Children and Family Services Secretary Marketa Garner Walters, "and we are so glad to finally be able to provide more meaningful financial support to the families who help ensure the safety and well-being of the children entrusted to the State's custody.

"Our foster caregivers not only provide for the basic needs of the children placed in their home, but also provide specialized care to address the trauma experienced from abuse or neglect. We're eternally grateful to them for their service," she said.

Foster care board rates are based on the age of the child and are paid to foster caregivers and relatives whose homes are certified for children in the custody of the state. Board rates are intended to help meet the daily needs of the child for shelter, food, clothing, allowance and incidental expenses, and cannot be used for unrelated expenditures.

Johnson has a history of caring for children whose parents are unable or unwilling to do it. He founded the Rapides Children's Advocacy Center and the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program in Central Louisiana 25 years ago.

“It’s part of being pro-life,” he said. “People bring children into the world and sometimes we have to step in when natural parents are unable or unwilling to adequately care for the child.”

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