

NOVEMBER 2019

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FRIDAY
DECEMBER 3

LAW STUDENTS HELP GAIN PASSAGE OF FOSTER CARE LAW

December 3, 2010

While entering the foster care system is a drastic change in a child's life, losing the comfort and companionship of a sibling can be devastating.

The Dickinson Schools of Law of the Pennsylvania State University Children's Advocacy Clinic recently teamed up with several organizations to draft legislation that would require county children and youth agencies to make every reasonable effort to place siblings together in foster care unless doing so is contrary to the safety and well-being of any sibling. Sponsored by State Representative Briggs (D-Montgomery), [House Bill 2258: Keeping Siblings in Foster Care Together](#) unanimously passed (49-0) in the Pennsylvania Senate on October 13, 2010, and was signed by Governor Ed Rendell on November 24, 2010.

As part of their experience in the Children's Advocacy Clinic, law students Kent Lloyd '10 and Megan Mazzoni '11 worked with various advocacy organizations, including the [Juvenile Law Center](#), and the [Pennsylvania Bar Association](#) in seeing that the bill was passed.

"Dependent children often face great challenges at a very young age, and having a sibling present to talk to and comfort them is certainly a step in the right direction. I am proud to have been involved with the drafting and editing of this bill and advocating the bill through the House of Representatives," said Lloyd.

After Lloyd graduated in May 2010, Mazzoni continued his efforts by following the legislation through the Senate. "As a law student advocating for legislation protecting the rights of foster children, passage of House Bill 2258 represents to me a promise from our legislature and judicial system that siblings in foster care will remain together and provide for each other the type of companionship and love that only siblings can feel for each other as they grow up together," said Mazzoni.

Work with state government officials on legislation like H.B. 2258 is part of the mission of the Children's Advocacy Clinic. Founded in 2006, under the direction of Professor Lucy Johnston-Walsh, the clinic allows students to hone their legal skills in the courtroom, as well as in areas of policy and legislation by developing broad solutions to systemic problems in the child welfare system.

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