

August 22, 2012

Office of California Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

I am writing to urge your support for Senate Bill 1064 by Senator De Leon. This bill addresses family reunification barriers in the child welfare system for immigrant families, encourages placement of children with relatives when possible, as well as screen for immigration relief options for those children who cannot be reunified with their parents. This bill has received the support of over 50 organizations and has strong bi-partisan support from both the California Assembly and Senate. If passed, this bill will be the first piece of state legislation to address the challenges facing detained or deported immigrant parents with children in the foster care system.

My remarkable parents believed strongly in helping children and families and fostered a total of 12 children in 12 years, ranging in age from infants to teenagers, from all different walks of life. Growing up in Iowa with my two brothers and many foster siblings and now as a parent of a young child myself, I know how important parents, close family members, and community are to the well-being and guidance of children. I am still in touch with some of my former foster siblings, many of whom have now graduated from college. I know firsthand how complicated the child welfare system is, even for those who speak English and are from this country so can only imagine the difficulties and struggles of those unfamiliar with our system and culture in immigration detention. SB1064 is an important step in the right direction to ensure that family stay together when possible and children are connected with relative placement when appropriate.

I became aware of this bill as a result of my involvement with the Children's Defense Fund and attendance at their recent national conference which included an advocacy priority to protect children from abuse and neglect and connect them to caring permanent families. I am grateful that my growing fame in the movie industry allows me the opportunity to bring attention to important foster care issues. Thank you for this opportunity to share my support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Monaghan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michelle Monaghan, Actress and Concerned Citizen

CC: Office of Senator Kevin de León, 22nd Senate District