Written Testimony of a Proponent of HB 2203

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Madam Chair Estes and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony today. I appreciate the time and consideration given to families like mine and to the important issues addressed in HB 2203.

My name is Stacy L. Crow. I am a mother and an adoptive parent, and I am here to share our family's experience and why this bill matters to us.

In 2014, my husband Derek and I adopted five children from the foster care system. At the time of adoption, our children ranged in age from 10 to 15. Like many families, we entered adoption with hope, a willingness to learn, and the belief that stability, consistency, and love would help our children thrive and succeed.

What we did not fully understand then—because we did not yet have the knowledge—was the lifelong impact of prenatal alcohol exposure.

Near the end of the adoption process, a caseworker shared a brochure and mentioned that one of our children needed a screening. At the time, we did not grasp what that truly meant. There was no clear explanation of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, no roadmap for what it could look like across a lifetime, and no understanding of how profoundly brain development could be affected.

That moment began a long journey of learning for our family.

Over time, we came to understand that all five of our children were affected by prenatal alcohol exposure, each in different ways. The challenges were not always obvious to others, because FASD is often invisible, but they were very real in our day-to-day lives.

Two of our children will require lifetime guardianship. Two others will need ongoing support to live safely and successfully. One is doing well in many ways, yet she also recognizes how FASD affects her impulse control, anxiety, and emotional regulation.

We understand that in today's world, educators, professionals, and families are balancing many concerns. When challenges arise, it is natural to focus on what can be seen. Behavior is often the first and most visible signal that something is not working. What we have learned is that behavior is often communication.

Our soon-to-be 27-year-old daughter is beautiful, loving, caring, and charismatic. She wants to do well and tries every day. And yet, she cannot reliably remember her own age—because the fact that it changes every year is a level of ongoing change her brain struggles to process. This is not a lack of effort or a choice. It is the result of a brain-based disability.

One of the most important lessons we have learned is that love and structure matter deeply—but they work best when paired with understanding how a brain functions and what supports that brain needs.

HB 2203 matters because it helps build shared understanding. It recognizes FASD as a brain-based disability and supports earlier awareness, more informed responses, and better alignment between needs and services.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my testimony and for your thoughtful consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy L. Crow

Taylor Victoria Crow – Our soon-to-be 27-year-old daughter, living with a brain-based disability caused by prenatal alcohol exposure.