



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 22, 2015

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Toomey's Take: Angels in Adoption Help Kids and Build Stronger Families

By U.S. Senator Pat Toomey

Every child needs and deserves a safe, stable, and loving home life. My wife, Kris, and I have been blessed with three wonderful, healthy children. We cherish them and place our obligations to them above all other responsibilities. But for hundreds of thousands of children, circumstances have robbed them of the love and support of a family.

Fortunately, there are "angels" -- people who selflessly choose to open their hearts and their homes to children in need. These inspiring Americans are numerous and reside all over the country. Many are here in Pennsylvania.

One such "angel" is Lisa Baronner. Lisa has devoted her life to supporting and advocating for adopted children. Not only has Lisa served in a leadership role at the Women's Care Center of Erie County's Adoption by Choice for more than 20 years, but she has also opened up her heart and her home as an adoptive mother.

Helping children and parents adjust to life after adoption, Lisa understands that the transition associated with building a new family does not end with the successful completion of paperwork. The forging of a bond of love, trust, and security between adoptive parents and adoptees can sometimes take months or even years. Thankfully, there are people like Lisa who aid in this transition process and work to ensure that adoptive families not only come together, but also thrive.

Through dedicated counseling and advocacy, Lisa works to ensure that adopted children in the Erie community have the opportunity to safely grow up as a member of a loving family.

Lisa Baronner has been a rock to thousands of children in her more than two decades of service to the Women's Care Center of Erie County and to Pennsylvania. One would think that Lisa struggles to find the time and energy to do much more, yet she does. Lisa has overseen more than 250 domestic and international adoptions, performed countless home studies for prospective families throughout Pennsylvania, cultivated relationships with dependable and loving families, worked through innumerable legal documents and placed hundreds of children in the loving arms of their new and joy-filled parents.

Each year, Members of Congress recognize community leaders who have truly made a difference for children by nominating an individual to be an "Angel in Adoption."

The "Angels in Adoption" program was established in 1999 by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. Since then, the program has honored more than 1,800 individuals, families, and organizations. I was pleased this year to nominate Lisa Baronner as Pennsylvania's "Angel in Adoption."

Our commonwealth is full of such unsung heroes – devoted individuals whose lives, work, and community service are directed to finding ways to improve the circumstances of others and the condition of our communities.

Thank you, Lisa for your commitment to our children.

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