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FOSTER CHILD BILL OF RIGHTS: The House also passed a package of bills creating a foster children bill of rights. HB 4976 , HB 4977 and HB 4978 passed 107-1, 108-0 and 107-1, respectively. Rep. Marcia Hovey-Wright (D-Muskegon), who sponsors one of the bills, said the bills create common sense policies. She said they will ensure foster care children "receive their basic rights."

Ms. Hovey-Wright said the bills include assurance that foster children will be treated with respect; placed with family members or siblings when appropriate, receive information about proposed placements if age appropriate; and are allowed visitation with family and friends when appropriate, among other things.

Rep. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake), sponsor of HB 4977, said he and his wife are foster parents and he hosts "KidSpeak" events to hear from foster children first hand.

"Failure to protect children in the foster care system can lead to a lifetime of additional barriers - emotional, intellectual and financial," he said in a statement. "This bill package will address the needs of children currently being unmet by Michigan's foster care system and layout a detailed plan that specifies the rights and protections of kids in the foster care system."

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Rep. Jim Runestad has hosted KidSpeak events sponsored by Michigan's Children in 2014 and 2015, once when he was still an Oakland County Commissioner, and the other after he had been elected to his 1st term in the Michigan House of Representatives.