HOUSE BILL 836
By Rudd

SENATE BILL 1304

By Pody

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 36, Chapter 1, Part 1, relative to child placement.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 36, Chapter 1, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

(a) To the extent allowed by federal law, no private licensed child-placing agency shall be required to perform, assist, counsel, recommend, consent to, refer, or participate in any placement of a child for foster care or adoption when the proposed placement would violate the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies.

(b) The department of children's services shall not deny an application for an initial license or renewal of a license or revoke the license of a private child-placing agency because of the agency's objection to performing, assisting, counseling, recommending, consenting to, referring, or participating in a placement that violates the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies.

(c) A state or local government entity shall not deny to a private licensed child-placing agency any grant, contract, or participation in a government program because of the agency's objection to performing, assisting, counseling, recommending, consenting to, referring, or participating in a placement that violates the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies.

(d) Refusal of a private licensed child-placing agency to perform, assist, counsel, recommend, consent to, refer, or participate in a placement that violates the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies shall not form the basis of a civil action for either damages or injunctive relief.

SECTION 2. The department of children's services may promulgate rules consistent with this act.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.