

# HOUSE BRIEFING

## Panelist Introductions



### KATHLEEN CREAMER

Kathleen Creamer is the Managing Attorney of the Family Advocacy Unit at Community Legal Services, which uses a holistic family defense model to represent parents involved with the child welfare system. Prior to joining CLS, she served as Director of Legal Services at Our Place, DC, a women's reentry nonprofit. Kathleen is a member of the Steering Committee for the American Bar Association's National Alliance for Parent Representation and co-chair of the Communications Committee for the Family Justice Initiative. She is also the co-chair of United Family Advocates, a national bipartisan policy coalition that seeks to create a more compassionate and just approach to supporting families and communities.



### APRIL LEE

April Lee is CLS' first Peer Parent Advocate in the Family Advocacy Unit, the first person in a role of this kind in Legal Services in Pennsylvania. April's lived experience with the Child Welfare system gives her a perspective and empathy that helps her to advocate for and assist parents going through similar situations. April sits on several boards in Philadelphia, including the Children's Coalition with PHMC, and has helped guide some of the research surrounding the Opioid Epidemic as part of the City of Philadelphia's Don't Take the Risk awareness campaign. April lives her life in service to others, from feeding the homeless, facilitating life skills groups, mentoring women throughout the community, to taking care of her family. When not working on other's needs April has a passion for writing and has performed her poetry on many stages throughout the City of Philadelphia and abroad.



### GISELA MARQUEZ-LEE

Born and raised in Mexico City, Gisela has spent her career as a flight attendant, an RN, and for Kaiser for 15 years in the Behavioral Health Department in Olympia. Her grand children originally were placed with the paternal grandmother because she broke 4 ribs the day before they were placed. She became the caregiver of her grandkids on August 16th 2021, when the paternal grandmother died of COVID. She has always been very close to the children as the whole family lived with her for 6 years, after they moved they spent most weekends at her house; so the transition was not as traumatic as it could have been if hadn't been available for the placement. Gisela states that "Kinship placement has been a blessing for the whole family." She recently became licensed as foster caregiver.

# Panelist Introductions



ROBERT ROMERO

Robert Romero, or Rob, and is from South Gate California. He was born in the city of Monterey Park and moved to South Gate where he was under the care of his aunt and uncle, where he still currently resides. He currently works as a forklift driver for Costco Wholesale in Lakewood, and went to school for Television Arts with a minor in Communications at Cal State Dominguez Hills 2021. He is an aspiring musician who has love for the environment and the Chicano/Latino community.



AMANDA JUDSON

Amanda Judson is a current community college student, and a former foster youth from Van Nuys, CA. After entering foster care at age 11, at age 17 Amanda entered kinship care with her older sister. In the future, Amanda aspires to transfer to a 4-year college where she can study counseling, or a similarly related field. Her hobbies include art, surfing, and hiking.