

rest are awaiting upgrades and are expected to be certified soon.

But Sacramento County is the exception. Most counties in January began using the standards to approve new foster placements with relatives but have not inspected the homes of relatives where children placed before January.

Until state officials can provide the federal government with proof that all relatives' homes in California have been certified, the penalties will continue—and will affect all counties alike.

The biggest backlog is in Los Angeles.

In March, prompted by the new statute, Los Angeles County conducted a sample survey of the foster homes of children placed with relatives. The county is home to more than half the state's foster children, and nearly 6,500 of them live with relatives.

Of the 200 homes surveyed, only two met federal standards. Among the deficiencies were 16 families who did not have adequate smoke detectors in their homes and 50 cases in which children shared a bed or slept in a non-bedroom area.

"Most cases can be remedied with adequate financial resources," the report concluded.

Pizzini said state officials have been working diligently on the issue for more than a year and criticized the federal government for its heavy penalty, saying there were lesser sanctions available.

But federal regulators and Schaffer, of the Youth Law Center said the state has not made any significant effort to meet federal guidelines, even though some remedies are fairly simple.

The Department of Social Services has yet to create and disperse a statewide standardized checklist for evaluating relatives' homes, as officials agreed to do in April, according to a federal letter.

The state has not provided any proof that homes have been approved using the new guidelines. And, despite a deadline of June to reassess the homes of all relatives providing foster care, thousands of homes have been checked.

"It was deliberately not done," said Schaffer, who says she plans to file the lawsuit this week. "It was either a financial or a philosophical position they were taking: Either we don't think relatives should be licensed, (that) they should be able to take care of their kids in any way they want. Or, if you look at it in a different way, neither the counties or the states way to pay the cost of having relatives assessed."

It is expensive.

In Sacramento County, officials created a kinship evaluation unit five months ago and

staffed it with six social workers who were removed from units in which they were overseeing the care of children.

Child Protective Services Director Leland Tom said he is proud that the county has evaluated every relative's home but that the cost has been high.

"It's having a major impact on our workload," Tom said. "And the sticking point for counties has been, here is this additional workload that is being pushed on us, but we're not being given additional funding to do it."

Pizzini said the state also has concerns about the potential harm to children, given that the new process takes longer to complete, in some cases forcing children into the foster homes of strangers before relatives can be cleared. She said allowances need to be made.

"Grandmother and Uncle don't come into our office three months ahead of time and say, 'In the future, you're going to remove one of my nieces (from her home),' " she said. "That doesn't happen. On the other hand, we recruit strangers to come into care, and we have the luxury of some time."

IN RECOGNITION OF CATHOLIC
HOME BUREAU

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 23, 2002

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to Catholic Home Bureau on the occasion of their Seventeenth Annual Child of Peace Dinner. For their unwavering commitment and many charitable endeavors, James and Colleen Donaghy will be honored with the Child of Peace Award.

A true leader and a hands-on executive, James Donaghy serves as Chairman of the Structure Tone Organization, one of the pre-eminent full-service Construction Management an General Contracting firms in the world today. Mr. Donaghy has actively participated in the company's strategic planning and worldwide business development efforts, helping to guide the firm through a challenging period into the multi-billion dollar global entity it is today.

Mr. Donaghy's incomparable professional commitment is mirrored by his dedication to

the arts and civic organizations in the community, as indicated by his membership in various boards, committees and councils including the Board of Directors of The Boy Scouts of America, St. Thomas Aquinas College, Covenant House and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Mr. Donaghy's civic mindedness extends to his organization, which provides substantial contributions and support to charities throughout the New York City metropolitan area.

Colleen Donaghy has also extended her professional expertise as a social worker to the community by assisting the elderly at Riverdale Senior Services Center. Proud new parents of their first child, James Kieran Donaghy, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Donaghy have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to improving the lives of underprivileged New Yorkers.

I would also like to commend Catholic Home Bureau for their significant efforts to enhance the quality of life for families and children in the New York Metropolitan area since 1899. Catholic Home Bureau currently operates a foster care program and a family day care program through New York City's Administration for Children's Services, a shelter program through New York City's Department of Homeless Services, and a privately funded Maternity Services and Private Adoption Program.

The Child of Peace Dinner benefits the Maternity Services Program which is one of the largest providers of private maternity services in the New York Archdiocesan network. The Maternity Services Program aids women and families in need who are facing a crisis pregnancy with counseling, medical care, infant and maternity clothing, cribs, housing referrals, and emergency assistance. I want to recognize the dedication of Bernard and Peggy Smyth, who are this year's Dinner Chairpersons. In addition to being adoptive parents for Catholic Home Bureau, they both have demonstrated their commitment to helping the organization achieve its mission.

In recognition of James and Colleen Donaghy's selfless efforts and Catholic Home Bureau's outstanding contributions to the community, I ask that my colleagues join me in saluting Catholic Home Bureau on the occasion of their 17th Annual Child of Peace Dinner.