

RESOLUTION

Mandate the availability of Kinship Program Services to grandparents and eliminate placing children into Foster Care before they can become eligible for assistance.

A RESOLUTION TO: Support grandparents as parents and other relative kinship care in Texas.

WHEREAS: In 2003, Texas ranked number 2 in the nation with more than 602,000 children under the age of 18 raised by a grandparent; and,

WHEREAS: Drugs, abuse, family violence, arrest, incarceration, death, illness and/or disability of an adult child are the major reasons for the increasing number of kincare families within this State, and, therefore, grandparents are confronted with overwhelming issues including parenting responsibilities; role changes; increased financial strain on an already stretched fixed income; complex legal issues relating to adoption, conservatorship, guardianship, public benefits, or even the inability to access legal counsel due to limited resources; emotional and physical health concerns for the child who was abandoned by their parent and who may also have physical scars from abuse, and for the grandparent who may be confronted with depression and chronic health conditions; issues related to emergency medical care, health insurance, or enrollment of a grandchild into school if legal processes have not been obtained; and immediate day to day concerns such as purchasing school supplies, clothing, furniture, baby bed and formula and other necessities; and,

WHEREAS: The first choice of the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services for placement of an abused or neglected child received by Child Protective Services is voluntary placement with a grandparent or other kincare relative, thereby making it unnecessary for a placement in the Child Protective Services system; but currently, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services makes it MANDATORY for children to become part of the Child Protective Services system BEFORE any services can be accessed by the relatives caring for the child; and, unlike many other states, Texas does not offer monthly Foster Care subsidy payments to grandparents or other kinship relatives; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the 11th Texas Silver-Haired Legislature encourage and strongly recommend that the 80th Texas Legislature to mandate the availability of Kinship Program Services to grandparents whose grandchild(ren) have been VOLUNTARILY PLACED with grandparents, and eliminate the requirement of placing children into Foster Care before they can become eligible for assistance.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 11th day of September, 2006, by the Retirement & Aging Committee.

Brigitte Rogers, Chair

PASSED AND APPROVED this 12th day of September, 2006, by the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature.

Charlotte Parks, Speaker

ATTEST:

Carlos Higgins, Secretary