

Amendment No. 1 (for drafter's use only)

	<u>Senate</u>	CHAMBER ACTION	<u>House</u>
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ORIGINAL STAMP BELOW

11 The Committee on Health & Human Services Appropriations
12 offered the following:

14 **Amendment (with title amendment)**

15 On page 153, line 1 through page 155, line 12,
16 remove from the bill: all of said lines,

17
18 and insert in lieu thereof: (1) It is the intent of the
19 Legislature in enacting this section to:

20 (a) Recognize family relationships in which a
21 grandparent or other relative is the head of a household that
22 includes a child otherwise at risk of foster care placement.

23 (b) Enhance family preservation and stability by
24 recognizing that most children in such placements with
25 grandparents and other relatives do not need intensive
26 supervision of the placement by the courts or by the
27 department.

28 (c) Provide additional placement options and
29 incentives that will achieve permanency and stability for many
30 children who are otherwise at risk of foster care placement
31 because of abuse, abandonment, or neglect, but who may

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1 successfully be able to be placed by the dependency court in
2 the care of such relatives.

3 (d) Reserve the limited casework and supervisory
4 resources of the courts and the department for those cases in
5 which children do not have the option for safe, stable care
6 within the family.

7 (2)(a) The Department of Children and Family Services
8 shall establish and operate the Relative-Caregiver Program
9 pursuant to eligibility guidelines established in this section
10 as further implemented by rule of the department. The
11 Relative-Caregiver Program shall, within the limits of
12 available funding, provide financial assistance to relatives
13 who are within the fifth degree by blood or marriage to the
14 parent or stepparent of a child and who are caring full-time
15 for that child in the role of substitute parent as a result of
16 a departmental determination of child abuse, neglect, or
17 abandonment and subsequent placement with the relative
18 pursuant to chapter 39. Such placement may be either
19 court-ordered temporary legal custody to the relative pursuant
20 to s. 39.508(9), or court-ordered placement in the home of a
21 relative under protective supervision of the department
22 pursuant to s. 39.508(9). The Relative-Caregiver Program
23 shall offer financial assistance to caregivers who are
24 relatives and who would be unable to serve in that capacity
25 without the relative-caregiver payment because of financial
26 burden, thus exposing the child to the trauma of placement in
27 a shelter or in foster care.

28 (b) Caregivers who are relatives and who receive
29 assistance under this section must be capable, as determined
30 by a home study, of providing a physically safe environment
31 and a stable, supportive home for the children under their

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1 care, and must assure that the children's well-being is met,
2 including, but not limited to, the provision of immunizations,
3 education, and mental health services as needed.

4 (c) Relatives who qualify for and participate in the
5 Relative-Caregiver Program are not required to meet foster
6 care licensing requirements under s. 409.175.

7 (d) Relatives who are caring for children placed with
8 them by the child protection system shall receive a special
9 monthly relative-caregiver benefit established by rule of the
10 department. The amount of the special benefit payment shall
11 be based on the child's age within a payment schedule
12 established by rule of the department and subject to
13 availability of funding. The statewide average monthly rate
14 for children judicially placed with relatives who are not
15 licensed as foster homes may not exceed 82 percent of the
16 statewide average foster care rate, nor may the cost of
17 providing the assistance described in this section to any
18 relative-caregiver exceed the cost of providing out-of-home
19 care in emergency shelter or foster care.

20 (e) Children receiving cash benefits under this
21 section are not eligible to simultaneously receive WAGES cash
22 benefits under chapter 414.

23 (f) Within available funding, the Relative-Caregiver
24 Program shall provide relative-caregivers with family support
25 and preservation services, flexible funds in accordance with
26 s. 409.165, subsidized child care, and other available
27 services in order to support the child's safety, growth, and
28 healthy development. Children living with relative-caregivers
29 who are receiving assistance under this section shall be
30 eligible for medicaid coverage.

31 (g) The department may use appropriate available

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1 state, federal, and private funds to operate the
2 Relative-Caregiver Program.

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5 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

6 And the title is amended as follows:

7 On page 4, lines 30 and 31,
8 remove from the title of the bill: said lines,

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10 and insert in lieu thereof:

11 Program; directing the Department of Children
12 and Family Services to establish and operate
13 the Relative-Caregiver Program; providing
14 financial assistance within available resources
15 to relatives caring for children; providing for
16 financial assistance and support services to
17 relatives caring for children placed with them
18 by the child protection system; providing for
19 rules establishing eligibility guidelines,
20 caregiver benefits, and payment schedule;
21 renumbering and
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