

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 Children & Family Empowerment offered the
12 following:

14 **Amendment (with title amendment)**

15 On page 2, line 3, through page 4, line 13
16 remove from the bill: all of said lines

18 and insert in lieu thereof:

19 415.531 Relative Caregiver Program.--

20 (1) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting
21 this section to:

22 (a) Recognize family relationships in which a
23 grandparent or other relative is the head of a household which
24 includes a child otherwise at risk of the trauma of
25 out-of-home placement, through removing barriers to such
26 family relationships such as unnecessary licensing
27 requirements and lack of financial assistance.

28 (b) Enhance family preservation and stability by
29 recognizing that children in such long-term, stable placements
30 with grandparents and other relatives do not need continued
31 government supervision of the placement by the courts or the

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1 child protection system.

2 (c) Provide additional placement options and
3 incentives that will achieve permanency and stability for many
4 children who are otherwise at risk of the trauma of entering
5 the child protection system because of abuse, abandonment, or
6 neglect, but who may successfully be able to be placed by the
7 courts or the child protection system in the care of such
8 relatives.

9 (d) Reserve the limited casework and supervisory
10 resources of the courts and the child protection system for
11 those cases in which children do not have the option for safe,
12 stable care within the family.

13 (2)(a) The department shall establish and operate the
14 Relative Caregiver Program to provide financial assistance to
15 relatives, within the fifth degree by blood or marriage to the
16 parent or stepparent of a child, who are caring full-time for
17 that child in the role of substitute parent as a result of a
18 departmental determination and subsequent court order with a
19 finding that it is contrary to the child's best interest for
20 the child to remain at home. The Relative Caregiver Program
21 shall offer financial assistance to relative caregivers who
22 would be unable to serve in such capacity without the relative
23 caregiver benefit payment because of the financial burden,
24 thus exposing the child to the trauma of placement in shelter
25 or foster care.

26 (b) Relative caregivers who receive assistance under
27 this section must be capable, as determined by a home study,
28 of providing a physically safe environment and a stable,
29 supportive home for the children under their care. Relatives
30 who qualify for the Relative Caregiver Program shall be exempt
31 from foster care licensing requirements under s. 409.175.

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1 (c) Relative caregivers who are caring for children
2 placed with them by the child protection system shall receive
3 a special monthly relative caregiver benefit payment. The
4 relative caregiver shall ensure that requirements for the
5 child's well-being, including immunizations, education, and
6 mental health services, can be met. The amount of the special
7 benefit payment shall be based on the child's age and needed
8 care. Relative caregivers shall receive a monthly benefit
9 payment according to their financial need and the risk to the
10 child of out-of-home placement, under eligibility criteria
11 established by the department. Children receiving cash
12 benefits under this section shall not be eligible to
13 simultaneously receive WAGES cash benefits under s. 414.095.

14 (d) Within available funding, the department shall
15 provide relative caregivers with family support and family
16 preservation services, flexible funds in accordance with s.
17 409.165, subsidized child care, and other services which would
18 otherwise be available to children in foster care, to support
19 the child's safety, growth, and healthy development.

20 (e) Children living with relative caregivers who are
21 receiving assistance under this section shall be eligible to
22 receive the same medical coverage available for children in
23 foster care.

24 (f) The department is authorized to maximize the use
25 of federal funds under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act
26 and the Temporary Assistance For Needy Families program, as
27 well as other appropriate state, federal, and private funds,
28 to operate the Relative Caregiver Program. For each child
29 served, the cost of providing the assistance and services
30 described in this section shall not exceed the cost of
31 providing out-of-home care in shelter or foster care.

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1 (g) The department shall adopt rules to implement 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 1, lines 6-11
8 remove from the title of the bill: all of said lines
9
10 and insert in lieu thereof:
11 operate the Relative Caregiver Program;
12 providing for financial assistance and support
13 services to relatives caring for children;
14 providing eligibility of such children for
15 certain medical coverage; providing for
16 funding; providing a
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