

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

The Grandfamilies Act of 2022

U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)

Why do we need the Grandfamilies Act?

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) study found that **more than 2.7 million children** in the United States are being raised by grandparents and other relatives, also known as kinship caregivers – about 20 times more than those placed in foster care. While experts believe these numbers have climbed due to the opioid epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic, there is a long history of grandparents and other relatives stepping in to care for children when parents are unable.

Taking on a kinship caregiving role can come unexpectedly and with little help. Grandparents and other relatives often face challenges affording the costs of raising a child and may postpone retirement, downsize a home, or deprioritize their own medical needs in order to pay for their new caregiving expenses. One in five grandfamilies and kinship households live at or below the poverty line and almost half of those residing in grandmother-only households are living in poverty. Because of their limited resources, access to benefits is critical to the financial security of grandfamilies and kinship families.

What will the Grandfamilies Act do?

The Grandfamilies Act will provide grandfamilies and kinship families with greater access to cash benefits and uplift community-based efforts that address their unique needs. Specifically, the bill will:

- Increase access to Social Security child's benefits for grandfamilies and kinship families;
- Expand Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to make financial resources more accessible to grandfamilies;
- Promote temporary guardianship laws that enable grandparents and kin relatives to make important decisions on the child's behalf;
- Ensure states are prepared to provide streamlined support to grandfamilies by establishing funding to help states develop plans to support grandparents raising grandchildren; and
- Provide competitive grants to support collaborative community-based efforts to provide mental health and peer support to grandfamilies.

Co-Sponsors: Senators Sherrod Brown, Tammy Baldwin and Kirsten Gillibrand

Endorsing Organizations: Generations United and the National Council on Aging