

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

Grandfamilies Act of 2023

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

Why Do We Need the Grandfamilies Act?

There are **more than 2.7 million children** in the United States that are being raised by grandparents and other relatives or close family friends, also known as kinship caregivers. 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.

When children are unable to reside with their parents, research shows that they are best served living with grandparents, other relatives, or close family friends. This is especially true when grandfamilies and kinship families receive the support and services they need to provide for the children in their care. For many grandparent and kinship caregivers, 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 to pay for their new caregiving expenses.

Nearly 20 percent of grandfamilies live below the poverty line, and their limited resources can lead to chronic stress and mental health concerns among grandparent and kinship caregivers. As such, access to benefits is critical for the financial security and mental health of grandfamilies and kinship families.

What will the Grandfamilies Act do?

The Grandfamilies Act will increase grandfamilies' and kinship families' 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 and caregivers caring for a child with a disability;
- 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 Gillibrand and Brown

Supporters: Generations United