

MINUTES OF THE SENATE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dwayne Umbarger at 10:30 A.M. on February 3, 2005 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Senator Stephen Morris - excused

Committee staff present:

Jill Wolters, Senior Assistant, Revisor of Statutes
Alan Conroy, Director, Kansas Legislative Research Department
J. G. Scott, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Amy Deckard, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Audrey Dunkel, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Susan Kannarr, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Becky Krahl, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Matt Spurgin, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Robert Waller, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Judy Bromich, Administrative Analyst
Mary Shaw, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Senator John Vratil
Representative Oletha Faust-Goudeau
Senator Roger Reitz
William A. Dean, Silver Haired Legislature
Cindy D'Ercole, Senior Policy Analyst, Kansas Action for Children
Greta Reeves, Member, AARP Kansas
Michael Farmer, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference
Kim Strunk, Grandparent, Altamont, Kansas
Marva Williams, Grandparent
Alice Kitchen, Family Friends
Candace A. Nelson, Founder of Guard Our Children, Mission, Kansas
Leann Hochstetler, Grandparent, Roeland Park, Kansas
Phyllis Smith, Grandparent
Alma Smith, Grandparent
Bessie Barnes, Grandparent
Joyce Strickland, Grandparent, Overland Park (written)
Margo Moore, Grandparent (written)
Craig Kaberline, Executive Director, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association (written)

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Umbarger opened the public hearing on:

SB 62--Grandparents as foster parents program, established

The Chairman welcomed the following conferees on **SB 62**:

Senator John Vratil testified in support of **SB 62 (Attachment 1)**. He explained that the idea of the bill originated with the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature and was adopted at their annual meeting in October, 2003. Senator Vratil noted the bill would make it easier for grandparents to acct in the role of foster parents in providing parental services to needy children. **SB 62** would require the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) to establish a grandparents as foster parents program within SRS.

Representative Oletha Faust-Goudeau testified in favor of **SB 62 (Attachment 2)**. Representative Faust-Goudeau mentioned that there is an urgent need for SB 62 in her district which is highly populated with a

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constituency of senior citizens and a large percentage are grandparents raising grandchildren and need additional financial assistance.

The hearing on **SB 62** was temporarily suspended. The Chairman opened the public hearing on:

SB 89--Payment of certain medical expenses of prisoners injured by a state officer or employee

Chairman Umbarger welcomed Senator Roger Reitz, who spoke in favor of **SB 89** (Attachment 3). Senator Reitz explained that **SB 89** has to do with responsibility of the State for performance of its employees. He mentioned that at the present time the county in which an altercation develops between a state law enforcement officer and a suspected miscreant pays for any medical bills resulting from injury inflicted on the latter. Senator Reitz noted that the officer acting in the line of duty should be totally supported by his or her employer.

Staff briefed the committee on the bill.

There being no further conferees to come before the committee, the Chairman closed the public hearing on **SB 89**.

The Chairman continued the public hearing on **SB 62**:

Staff briefed the committee on the bill.

Testimony continued as follows:

William A. Dean, Silver Haired Legislature, addressed **SB 62** and noted that the bill is needed to help senior citizens, often on limited income, who are taking care of their grandchildren (Attachment 4). Mr. Dean explained that **SB 62** would allow grandparents whose annual income is less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level to receive help such as learning parenting skills all over again from the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. He noted that the grandparents would need to know the kinds of help available and how to secure this help.

Cindy D'Ercole, Senior Policy Analyst, Kansas Action for Children, explained that Kansas Action for Children supports **SB 62** because it is clear that the unique challenges faced by this population create a need to revisit the policies and procedures designed for parent-child arrangements (Attachment 5). Ms. D'Ercole also noted and detailed in her testimony that although there is overwhelming support to address the needs of grandparents, there are also some limitations in this particular bill that must be pointed out.

Greeta Reeves, Member, AARP Kansas, spoke in support of **SB 62** and noted that grandparents raising grandchildren was not an isolated condition. She noted that the number of grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren has been increasing rapidly over the past decade (Attachment 6).

Michael Farmer, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference, the public policy office of the Catholic Church in Kansas, who spoke in support of **SB 62** (Attachment 7). Mr. Farmer explained that under current law, grandparents who are care givers for their grandchildren are not entitled to receive the same benefits provided to foster parents. In closing, Mr. Farmer mentioned that recognizing the benefits of children being raised by family and not by strangers, the Kansas Catholic Conference supports the bill.

Kim Strunk, Grandparent, Altamont, Kansas, testified in support of **SB 62** although at this time the bill would not benefit her family because she and her husband do not meet the age criteria (Attachment 8). Ms. Strunk emphasized that grandparents should be able to be "foster care" providers and reimbursed instead of traumatizing the children and removing them completely from their family members, who did not make poor choices, and placing them with strangers.

Marva Williams, Grandparent, spoke in favor of **SB 62** and mentioned that if her granddaughter was placed in a licensed non-relative foster home with a stranger, SRS would have paid the typical payment received for

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one child in foster care of \$570. Mrs. Williams explained that because her granddaughter was in a licensed foster home of a relative (hers), the only way she could be fully reimbursed as a licensed foster parent was if she also took a non-relative child ([Attachment 9](#)).

Alice Kitchen, Family Friends, testified in support of **SB 62**, and suggested amending the bill to include Title IV-E waivers that provide a monthly guardianship subsidy that is equal to or less than the current foster care payment, with approximately half of the cost born by the federal government. She also noted that federal support through waivers helped states promote subsidized guardianship as a permanency option for grandparent care givers ([Attachment 10](#)).

Candace A. Nelson, Founder of Guard Our Children, Mission, Kansas, testified in support of **SB 62** ([Attachment 11](#)). Ms. Nelson explained that she has always been her grandchildren's fostering parents. As a citizen, Ms. Nelson urged support of the bill in a swift manner and thus ensuring grandchildren the continuity of care they deserve by allowing the children to reside in the homes of their grandparents.

Leann Hochstetler, Grandparent, Roeland Park, Kansas, spoke in favor of **SB 62** ([Attachment 12](#)). Ms. Hochstetler mentioned that there many stories of grandparents who chose to raise their grandchildren rather than put them in foster care or place them up for adoption, making that same great sacrifice.

Phyllis Smith, Grandparent, testified in favor of **SB 62** and explained that she was thrust into the role of a parent six years ago ([Attachment 13](#)). Ms. Smith mentioned that financial hardships and burdens, as well as mental stress and anguish are part of the role.

Alma Smith, Grandparent, spoke in support of **SB 62** and mentioned that she has been taking care of four grandchildren ([Attachment 14](#)). Ms. Smith explained that she receives Social Security so she is on a fixed income which is hard for one person, but now she must provide for four growing children.

Bessie Barnes, Grandparent, spoke in support of **SB 62** and noted that she is an active grandparent raising two active grandsons ([Attachment 15](#)). Ms. Barnes mentioned that the hardships could be decreased if **SB 62** would be considered and how important the bill is to grandparents.

Written testimony was submitted on **SB 62** by:

Joyce Strickland, Grandparent, Overland Park ([Attachment 16](#))

Margo Moore, Grandparent ([Attachment 17](#))

Craig Kaberline, Executive Director, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association ([Attachment 18](#))

The Chairman held the hearing open on **SB 62** and the hearing will be scheduled to be continued at a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2005.

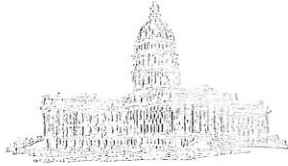
**SENATE WAYS AND MEANS
GUEST LIST**

Date February 3, 2005

NAME	REPRESENTING
Greta Reeves	AARP
Ernie Poggio	AARP
Bill Dean	Silvered Haired Leg
Kim Strunk	Grandparent
MIKE PURDON	IARC
Julie Thomas	DOB
Alvi Kilt	CMH
Donna Bates	Kansas Farm Bureau Women's Com.
Candy Shively	SRS
Marjorie Freneman	Farm Bureau / Allen Co.
Nellie Metzger	S.H.L.
Betty M. Dunn	S.H.L.
John Hellshear	AARP & Silver Haired Legislators
Barb Conrad	Ks Dept of Ag
Cyrene Williams	Family Friends - CMH
Bessie M. Barnes	Grandparent
Alma Smith	Grandparent
Fuchs Smith	Grandparent
Lita Walker	Family Friends - CMH

State of Kansas

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1-800-432-3924
www.johnvratil.com



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VICE CHAIR: EDUCATION
MEMBER: FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS
ORGANIZATION, CALENDAR
AND RULES
SENTENCING COMMISSION
INTERSTATE COOPERATION

Vice President Kansas Senate SENATE BILL 62 GRANDPARENTS AS FOSTER PARENTS ACT February 3, 2005

I appear today in support of Senate Bill 62 which is the "Grandparents as Foster Parents Act." The idea of this bill originated with the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature and was adopted at their annual meeting in October, 2003. Generally speaking, the bill would make it easier for grandparents to act in the role of foster parents in providing parental services to needy children.

Senate Bill 62 requires the Secretary of Social and Rehabilitation Services to establish a grandparents as foster parents program within SRS. The program would be administered in a manner so as to recognize that:

1. Raising a grandchild differs from when grandparents raised their own children;
2. Caring for a grandchild often places additional financial, social, and psychological strain on grandparents with fixed incomes;
3. Different parenting skills are necessary in raising a grandchild and many grandparents do not possess such skills, are not aware of how to obtain such skills, and cannot afford access to services necessary to obtain such skills;
4. Grandparents, like non-relative foster parents, need a support structure, including counseling, respite care, transportation assistance, and child care;
5. The level of care provided by grandparents does not differ from non-relative foster care, but reimbursement for such care is substantially less for grandparents;

HOME
9534 LEE BLVD.
LEAWOOD, KS 66206
(913) 341-7559
jvratil@lathropgag.com

DISTRICT OFFICE
10851 MASTIN BLVD.
SUITE 1000
OVERLAND PARK, KS 66210-2007
(913) 451-5100
FAX (913) 451-0875

STATE OFFICE

Senate Ways and Means
2-03-05
Attachment 1

6. Grandparents are often unaware of medical and other assistance which they may be able to receive to support grandchildren placed in their care.

In order to be eligible for the program, a grandparent must be 50 years of age or older, must have actual custody of a grandchild, must have an annual household income of less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level, and must participate in training providing by SRS. Subject to appropriations, the Secretary of SRS would be required to provide reimbursement for grandparents acting as foster parents in an amount not less than 75 percent of the current foster care payment service provider's schedule. Annually, grandparents acting as foster parents would be required to submit to SRS a sworn statement that the child is living with the grandparent and receiving support from the grandparent. A parent of any child receiving assistance through the program would remain liable for supporting the child as required by law. SRS would be required to establish foster parent training, including parenting skills, for grandparents acting as foster parents. It would also provide childhood immunization and health screening for the children.

The intent of this bill is to provide additional resources for the care and nurturing of foster children in need. In many communities, grandparents are an untapped resource for the foster children program. Grandparents are willing to care for their grandchildren but, many times, are not aware of how the system works and how they can obtain assistance and training from SRS. The "Grandparents as Foster Parents Program" is intended to combine the untapped resource of grandparents with the training and resources of SRS to enhance our state foster care program. I urge your support of Senate Bill 62.



SENATE BILL No. 62

AN ACT enacting the grandparents as foster parents act; prescribing powers, duties and functions for the secretary of social and rehabilitation services.

Overview SB 62: The Grandparents as Foster Parents Act would give low income grandparents and, in certain situations, low income relatives who have legal custody or legal guardianship of the foster child benefits similar to those that a nonrelative foster parent receives. The Secretary of the department of social and rehabilitation services would run the program and devise rules for the program in accordance with the provisions this act.

Requirements Needed To Qualify For Assistance:

Section 4: (a)

- (1) 50 years of age or older;
- (2) Grandparent is the legal guardian of the grandchild or has other legal custody of the grandchild;
- (3) has an annual household income of less than 130% of the federal poverty level¹; and
- (4) participates in the training available through the program pursuant to section 6, and amendments thereto.

(b) A grandparent is not eligible to participate in the program if the parent or parents of the child reside with grandparent.

(c) The secretary annually reviews the eligibility of the grandparents. Grandparents shall be required to meet eligibility requirements each year to continue in the program.

Section 5: Allows other close relatives, who are the legal guardian of the child or obtains legal custody of the child, to receive the same benefits if they meet the requirements in Sec. 4.

Section 6: The secretary:

- (a) Shall reimburse grandparents at least 75% of the amount of the current foster care payment service provider schedule. Grandparents would be eligible to receive assistance until the child reaches the age of 18 or, if the child is a full-time secondary school student, a post-secondary student, or is in a state accredited job training program, until the age of 21.
- (b) shall establish program requirements including, participation in foster parent training, parenting skills training, childhood immunizations and other health screenings;
- (c) may provide continuing counseling for the child and grandparent under the program;
- (d) may provide ancillary or support services including, but not limited to, respite care, child care clothing allowances and transportation assistance. Eligibility for child care services shall be based on the same eligibility criteria used for other child care benefits provided by the department. Financial assistance would not be made to a grandparent until after completion of training required by subsection (b);
- (e) shall provide a medical card and other medical assistance to each child under the program; and
- (f) shall establish criteria for the reduction in cash benefits for grandparents providing care for three or more grandchildren.

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2004 HHS Poverty Guidelines

Size of Family Unit	Federal Poverty Level	130% of Poverty Level
1	\$ 9,310	\$12,103
2	\$12,490	\$16,237
3	\$15,670	\$20,371

OLETHA FAUST-GOUDEAU
 REPRESENTATIVE, 84TH DISTRICT
 2641 E. 8TH STREET
 WICHITA, KANSAS 67214
 Faust-Goudeau@house.state.ks.us
 LEGISLATIVE ADDRESS
 ROOM 279-W
 (785) 296-7699
 STATE CAPITOL
 TOPEKA, KS 66612-1504



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TESTIMONY OF REPRESENTATIVE OLETHA FAUST-GOUDEAU ON BEHALF OF SB 62 BEFORE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Senator Umbarger, and other members of the committee.

I am honored to appear before you today in support of SB-62 Grandparents as Foster Parents.

I see an urgent need for this bill in my district, which is highly populated with a constituency of senior citizens and a large percentage are grandparents raising grandchildren and need additional financial assistance. I stand before you today on behalf of those citizens.

Commending foster parents for their willingness to take in children due to unfortunate circumstances of absent parents, this placement may be the only alternative. However, cases in which the grandparents are willing to take the child or children for sake of keeping the family unit together, then we must support this effort by providing financial assistance as received by foster parents offering the same type of service, providing all eligibility requirements are met as so stated in SB-62.

My Mother raised five grandchildren due to the death of their biological parents, and I witnessed the difficulty she endured. This bill would certainly have helped her. The passage of SB-62 can assist our grandparents in the future.

I urge approval of Senate Bill 62. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Oletha Faust-Goudeau

Senate Ways and Means
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 Attachment 2 2

Good morning:

Senate Bill 89 has to do with responsibility of the state for performance of it's employees. At the present time the county in which an altercation develops between a state law enforcement officer and a suspected miscreant pays for any medical bills resulting from injury inflicted on the latter. The officer acting in the line of duty should be totally supported by his or her employer. Current law dictates that the county where the injury occurs pays medical expenses for the incident. The site of the inflicted injury should have no bearing on the responsibility of the whole state.

Three years ago on I-70 in Riley County a Kansas highway patrolman stopped a vehicle carrying two men. As he approached the car the driver made a move as to produce a weapon and the patrolman shot him. The injury was severe and the trooper was not harmed.

The victim was transported to a Manhattan hospital with severe injuries and a long operation ensued, which was successful. A three week convalesce followed in the hospital with a total bill of around \$110,000. This was submitted to Riley County. With a budget of 27 million dollars the county was able to pay the bill but not all Kansas counties could do this and the bill could have been much larger. Chautauqua or Elk County would likely not be able to assimilate such a bill into their budgets.

This bill places the financial burden for such admittedly rare events to be borne by the state if no other source of payment can be found.

Roger Reitz
Senator Dist # 22.

Senator Roger Reitz

Senate Ways and Means
2-03-05
Attachment 3 3

Silver Haired Legislator
PSA # 11, District 4
Johnson County, KS

8304 Connell Street
Overland Park, KS 66212-4419
Phone & Fax: 913-648-3205
E.mail: wdean8304@sbcglobal.net

SB 62, 2005 Legislative Session

The 125 members of the Kansas Silver Haired Legislators support SB 62 which is known as "Grandparents as Foster Parents Act." It is needed to help our senior citizens, often on limited income, who are taking care of their grandchildren. The latest U.S. Census Data shows approximately one-third of these grandparents, living below the poverty level, are raising their grandchildren without a parent in the home.

The 2002 data shows Kansas has over 36,000 households headed by grandparents taking care of their grandchildren. Nationally, over 4.5 million, or 6.3% of all American children under 18 years of age, are growing up in grandparent-based households. An example: in Topeka today, there are approximately 2,000 Grandparent Households with one or more of their own grandchildren. In half of these households, Grandparents are responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren (U.S. Census Bureau of 2000). It's oftentimes a daunting problem and challenge for Grandparents, especially those on limited/fixed income, many of whom also have severe health problems.

SB 62 will allow Grandparents whose annual income is less than 130% of the federal poverty level (\$18,000), to receive help such as learning parenting skills all over again, from SRS. They will need to know the kinds of help that are available and how to secure this help. Items which Grandparents never or rarely thought about include respite care, financial help, counseling for Grandparents and grandchildren, child care, etc. The sad fact is that most Grandparents don't know how to get help from SRS today. School, clothing, food, health care, transportation, every day necessities - knowledge of these factors is a must. Many Grandparents do not possess needed skills and are not aware of how to obtain such skills. They cannot financially afford to access necessary services for the grandchildren.

Paying for this Program imbedded in SB 62 involves using "TANF" and "Maintenance of Effort" Funds, as delineated in SB 62.

TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funds are the federal block grant moneys available to the State of Kansas for public assistance benefits and programs authorized by The Personal Responsibility & Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

"Maintenance of Effort Funds" which are state funds appropriated for the AFDC emergency assistance, AFDC-related child care and the JOBS Program, will be available to help fund this program of "Grandparents as Foster Parents." Thus, SB 62 will allow Grandparents whose annual income is less than 130% of the federal poverty level, to receive help from SRS through these and other funds.

The State of Missouri created a "Grandparents as Foster Parents" program in 1997. That state's TANF block grant funds are used to finance their program. Other states who use the TANF block grant funds similarly are: Florida and Louisiana. Other states who have received waivers for similar programs are: CA, DE, IL MD, MT and NC. ("Generations United," June issue).

Senate Ways and Means
Bill Dean 2-03-05
Attachment 4



Making a difference for Kansas children.

February 3, 2005

To: Kansas Senate Ways and Committee
From: Cindy D'Ercole, Sr. Policy Analyst
Re: Senate Bill 62 – Grandparents as Foster Parents

Kansas Action for Children supports enactment of Senate Bill 62.

It is clear that that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of grandparents assuming primary caregiving responsibility for their grandchildren in Kansas. Attached to this report are some of the significant findings from Kansas Action for Children's 2003 report, *Counting Kids: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*.

We support SB 62 because it is clear that the unique challenges faced by this population create a need to revisit the policies and procedures designed for parent-child arrangements. The proposed program would offer not only cash assistance to grandparents, but by working with other services offered by SRS, it has the potential to support grandparents and keep at-risk families out of the foster care system and the courts.

Although there is overwhelming support to address the needs of grandparents, there are also some limitations in this particular bill that must be pointed out.

The bill requires in subsection (d) that direct financial assistance shall not be made until required training is completed. Foster parent training referred to in line 13 can take 10 to 12 weeks to complete. This time frame also applies to other program requirements such as parenting skills training, childhood immunizations, and other health screenings. Although it is understandable that there is a need to be accountable and to make sure that grandparents have access to appropriate guidance and training, it must be understood that this bill is meant to help a targeted, vulnerable population under 130% of the poverty level. Two more weeks waiting for direct financial assistance can be a long time, let alone two months or even four months.

This bill is also subject to appropriation. Sec. 8 dictates funding for cash benefits and other assistance under this act shall be made from state maintenance of effort funds. As advocates who follow the SRS budget, our understanding is that the Kansas MOE is already committed, although that is not true in all states. We are worried that this will result in inadequate funding for this program, cuts in other services, or that it will jeopardize our ability to meet the requirements of the TANF block grant.

Of the grandparents caring for their grandchildren in Kansas, 17% are living below established poverty levels. We support SB 62 and other efforts to provide essential family supports including child care, health care, and affordable housing.

Kansas Action for Children, Inc.
3360 SW Harrison | Topeka, KS 66611
P 785-232-0550 F 785-232-0699
kac@kac.org | www.kac.org

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A Member of Voices
for America's Children

Senate Ways and Means
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Attachment 5 5

There has been a dramatic increase in Kansas in the number of grandparents assuming primary caregiving responsibility for their grandchildren

- Approximately 18,000 Kansas grandparents are providing day-to-day care for their grandchildren (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).
- Between 1990 and 2000, there was a 43 percent increase in the percentage of grandchildren residing in grandparent-maintained households in Kansas, an increase that is much higher than that for the nation (30%).

Grandparents raising grandchildren face unique challenges

- Most Kansas grandparents caring for their grandchildren are also participating in the labor force (68%).
- The children for whom these grandparents care are most often young: 51 percent are under six years of age (Generations United, 2002).
- Although the majority of the grandparents caring for their grandchildren in Kansas are married, 28 percent are raising their grandchildren as single grandparents.
- Of the grandparents caring for their grandchildren in Kansas, 17 percent are living below established poverty levels.

SB 62: The Grandparents as Foster Parents Act

The unique challenges faced by the increasing number of grandparents assuming primary caregiving responsibilities for their grandchildren is creating a need to revisit the policies and procedures originally designed for parent-child arrangements.

Subject to appropriation, SB 62 would allow the state to serve a targeted population of grandparents who are:

- 50 years of age or older
- the legal guardian of the grandchild
- in households that earn less than 130% of the federal poverty level
- not living in the household with the parent(s) of the grandchild

Eligible grandparents would:

- be required to participate in training that would include, but not limited to, foster parent training, parenting skills training and health screenings
- receive reimbursement not less than 75% of the foster care service payment otherwise applicable to the child after the completion of required training

Funding

- Funding for cash assistance and other benefits under this act would be made from state maintenance of effort funds.
- Grandparents not eligible for this act may apply for benefits funded through TANF funds.

The program offers not only cash assistance to grandparents, but working with other services and supports offered by SRS, it has the potential to support grandparents and keep at-risk families out of the foster care system and the courts.



February 3, 2005

Senator Umbarger, Chair
Senate Ways and Means Committee
SB 62

Good morning Chairman Umbarger and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. My name is Greeta Reeves and I am a member of the AARP Kansas Topeka Advocacy Group. AARP Kansas represents the views of our more than 350,000 members in the state of Kansas. Thank you for this opportunity to express our comments and support of SB 62 relating to grandparents raising grandchildren.

Grandparenting issues in Kansas are a high priority for AARP Kansas members. In a 2003 survey 43 percent of those surveyed stated that rights of grandparents should have a high legislative priority.

The fact that there are approximately 600,000 children in foster care in America today is troubling enough by itself. Yet, all that's preventing millions more from joining them (and completely overwhelming the foster care system) are grandparents, and sometimes other kin, and their determination to keep their families together.

Grandparents raising grandchildren is not an isolated condition. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 4.5 million children live in grandparent-headed households these days—that's 6.3 percent of all children in the U.S. (Another 1.5 million live with other relatives.) And the trend is growing fast.

The number of grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren has been increasing rapidly over the past decade. According to data captured for the first time in 2000, more than 2.4 million grandparents have primary responsibility for the basic needs of the children living with them. Kansas now ranks #16 in the states when ranked by the percentage increase from 1990 to 2000 for children living in grandparent-headed households. During that 10-year period there was an increase of 43.4 percent or an additional 8,781 children living with grandparents, bringing the year 2000 total to 29,026.

According to the Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services 2005 Finger-Tip Facts the average number of children served in Foster Care during 2004 was 3,191 at a cost of \$90.9 (\$42.75 SGF) million dollars - an average cost of \$28, 842 per child.

The burdens of caregiving fall heaviest on those with limited means, but even better-off grandparents find that providing care can eat into retirement savings, curtail long-awaited travel plans, and even require a return to the labor force. And strained finances are only one problem grandparents and other kinship caregivers have to confront. Researchers have reported that grandparent caregivers are 60% more likely to live in poverty than are grandparents not raising grandchildren and the grandchildren in their care have unmet physical, emotional, and developmental needs that require special assistance.

Not all grandparents raising grandchildren require financial assistance, but many do. Nationally, twenty-seven percent of grandparent-maintained families are below the federal poverty line; another 28 percent are below 200 percent of that line.

Historically, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) offered the largest single source of cash assistance for grandparents and other caregiving relatives raising children. Depending on how states implement the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which replaced AFDC, grandparents and other caregiving relatives may find it more difficult to obtain cash assistance for the children in their care. Unlike foster parents, who receive cash support from states to help defray the cost of raising a child, grandparents and other relatives who serve as caregivers receive little or no financial aid.

The informal relationship most grandparent caregivers have with their dependent grandchildren also rules out foster care payments or adoption subsidies, by and large. Foster care implies state custody and state control, the very things, more often than not, grandparents or other relatives have stepped in to prevent.

AARP believes:

- State policies and regulations should be enacted that encourage grandparents and other caregiver relatives to keep families intact and provide for children in their care.
- States should enact legislation to eliminate the disparity between benefits paid to grandparents and other caregiving relatives and benefits paid to foster parents.

Therefore, AARP Kansas supports SB 62 and respectfully requests your support of this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Greta Reeves
AARP Kansas



6301 ANTIOCH • MERRIAM, KANSAS 66202 • PHONE/FAX 913-722-6633 • WWW.KSCATHCONF.ORG

Testimony in Support of SB 62

Chairman Umbarger and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 62, which would establish the Grandparents as Foster Parents Act. My name is Mike Farmer and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Catholic Conference, the public policy office of the Catholic Church in Kansas.

Last year the Kansas Catholic Conference supported the previous version of this bill, SB 320, which was amended by this committee and passed the full Senate by a 70% margin. Unfortunately it never received a hearing in the House. As we stated last year, the most recent census estimated that there were 17,873 grandparents in Kansas who were responsible for their grandchildren. Many of these caregivers are living on fixed incomes and are being severely financially stressed when they take on the obligation of raising their grandchildren.

When the parenting of a child is taken over by the grandparents, it is normally due to some negative event in the life of the child's parents. Grandparents can be a point of stability in a child's changing world. They have a special way of giving young people the gift of time and attention and encouragement to develop new skills and talents. Their example of steadfast faith helps younger family members to make appropriate life decisions. Grandparents can even bridge generation gaps before they are made.

Under current law grandparents who are caregivers for their grandchildren are not entitled to receive the same benefits provided to foster parents. Recognizing the benefits of children being raised by family and not by strangers, we support this bill and respectfully request that this committee recommends SB 62 favorable for passage.

Thank you.

Michael P. Farmer
Executive Director

MOST REVEREND RONALD M. GILMORE, S.T.L., D.D.
DIOCESE OF DODGE CITY

MOST REVEREND JAMES P. KELEHER, S.T.D.
Chairman of Board
ARCHDIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH F. NAUMANN, D.D.
COADJUTOR ARCHBISHOP
ARCHDIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS

MOST REVEREND PAUL S. COAKLEY, S.T.L., D.D.
DIOCESE OF SALINA

MICHAEL P. FARMER
Executive Director

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MOST REVEREND MARION F. FORST, D.D.
RETIRED

MOST REVEREND GEORGE K. FITZSIMONS, D.D.
RETIRED

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Good Morning Mr. Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Kim Strunk and I reside in Altamont, Kansas. I come to you today to encourage you to support SB62.

At the age of 38, my oldest daughter made me a grandma on my birthday. Then almost three years ago my second daughter, Kaci, blessed with Juliana and then 18 months later blessed us with Mayli. Juliana is now 2 1/2 and Mayli is 1. Mayli has never lived anywhere but at our home. During Mayli's 1st year of life, she was diagnosed as being deaf and having craniostenosis. I have taken her to several appointments and have ruled out her deafness, the true culprit was fluid behind the eardrums and dose of antibiotics cleared the problem up. Her craniostenosis, so far has shown no signs of causing mental retardation, which is usually the prognosis. Her pediatrician now thinks that her head has grown appropriately and it's now just a wait and see issue. I have taken off several times from work to make sure that her medical needs are met in SE Kansas and in KU Med Center. See Kaci has some pretty serious mental health issues that have kept her from being a "reliable" mom, so my husband and I have stepped up and have been raising the girls. The only assistance that we get at his time is WIC, a nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children, this project supplies milk, formula, eggs, cereal, juice and our choice of beans or peanut butter and the girls have medical cards through Healthwave. We do not receive any other financial assistance. All other needs are being met by us i.e.: clothing, childcare, diapers, food, housing, so on and so forth. We will continue to meet the girl's needs and provide them with a stable and nurturing home. We are not a wealthy family and as of January 1st, my husband lost his job that he had for 15 years. We still have two children at home of our own, Zach 18 and Katelynne who is 16. We have had to start using our savings to meet our financial needs now. Our childcare runs \$180/week and until the last month, when I finally got Juliana potty trained, we were spending about \$70/month on diapers. Since my husband lost his job, at this time he is keeping the girls at home with him 3 days/ week, so he can job hunt at least 2 days a week, because we can not afford the childcare costs.

As I know that this bill will not benefit my family at this time, since we do not meet the age criteria. I know that there are many grandparents in the state of Kansas in the same shoes that we are that do meet the criteria. It would break our hearts to think of "strangers"/Foster Care System raising Mayli and

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Juliana because of Kaci's inability to raise her children at this time. My husband was in the delivery room when Mayli was delivered C-Section, he held her 1st and carried her out of delivery room and has slept most every night in our bedroom. Grandparents should be able to be "foster care" providers and reimbursed instead of traumatizing the children and removing them completely from their families members, who did not make poor choice, and placing them with complete strangers.

Thank you for your time and effort put into this bill.

Sincerely,

Kim & Danny Strunk
PO Box 745
Altamont, KS 67330

Feb. 3, 2005

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
From: Marva Williams, grandparent
Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 62

Senator Umbarger and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Marva Williams, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you all today in support of Senate Bill 62 – The Grandparents as Foster Parents Act. I am a grandmother who is raising a 5-year-old granddaughter. I have much experience in dealing with grandparents as foster parents because I am both a grandparent caregiver and a licensed foster care provider.

When my granddaughter was one month old, I was contacted by SRS on a Friday and informed my granddaughter had been placed in SRS custody, and that a hearing would be held that following Monday, and in all likelihood she could be placed with me. That meant that I had three days get my house ready for a baby. In speaking with other grandparents raising grandchildren I have learned that this is usually the norm. There is typically a very short timeframe to get prepared to take on the responsibility of being the primary caregiver for your grandchild, or in many cases, more than one grandchild.

My granddaughter was in fact placed with me for 2 ½ months. She then went back to her biological mother, and was placed back with me a month later. I have had her since that time.

After I got my granddaughter back the second time, I became a licensed foster care provider; by:

1. Attending MAPP classes which focuses on parenting skills;
2. Attending CPR and First Aid Classes;
3. A home study was completed; and
4. A KBI and Child Abuse/Neglect check was done on me.

However, I was informed that I would not be reimbursed as a licensed foster parent to care for my granddaughter unless I agreed to also care for a non-relative child.

To restate this, if my granddaughter was placed in a licensed non-relative foster home with a stranger, they would be paid the typical payment received for one child in foster care of \$570. However, because she was in a licensed foster home of a relative, the only way I could be fully reimbursed as a licensed foster parent was if I also took a non-relative child.

Even though SRS supports the philosophy that children are, for the most part, better off with relatives, the dollars do not support this philosophy.

For most grandparents who take on this responsibility, taking care of their own grandchildren is plenty – they very often are not able because of health or financial reasons to take other non-relative children.

The grandparent or relative caregiver has the opportunity to apply for Temporary Assistance for Families, with a typical payment of \$175 per child. If you consider my typical monthly expenses of \$700-a-month to care for my granddaughter, which does not include emergency expenses; \$175 does very little to cover those expenses.

The other option open to grandparents such as myself is relative foster care, where the grandparent or relative caregiver agrees to care for their grandchild or relative children only. However, I have talked to the five child placement agencies that SRS contracts with, and although I have been told that they are all supposed to offer this to relative caregivers when the child is in SRS custody and placed with the relative, I have been informed by staff at several of these agencies that they do not offer this to relative caregivers because they do not have the funds.

Senate Bill 62 states that a grandparent who:

- (1) Is 50 years of age or older;
- (2) has the grandchild placed in such grandparent's custody by the state, is the legal guardian of the grandchild or has other legal custody of the grandchild;
- (3) has an annual household income of less than 130% of the federal poverty level, and
- (4) chooses to participate in a training program

would be **reimbursed not be less than 75% of the amount of the current foster care payment service provider schedule, and SRS reports a typical payment received for one child in a non-relative foster care placement is \$570/month – which is \$6,840/year.**

75% of \$570 is \$427.50 – which is a total of \$5,130/year.

If we do not provide supports to these grandparents, these children could be placed in non-relative foster care because of the grandparent's inability to financially meet their needs. Kansas taxpayers would then end up paying much more – both in dollars and in the loss of that family connection which we as a society so value. I have recently adopted my granddaughter, so if this bill would pass, I would receive no additional benefits. However, on behalf of the 18,000 Kansas grandparents raising grandchildren and as a grandparent raising a grandchild, I strongly encourage your support of SB 62. SB 62 would help these children, who have already been through so much, remain with

someone who loves them and who wants to take care of them, but needs some help and support to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

KANSAS

Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

A State Fact Sheet

August 2002

Across the country, more than six million children -- approximately 1 in 12 children -- are living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives. Kansas has nearly 38,000 children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives. In many of these households, grandparents and other relatives are the primary caregivers ("kinship caregivers") for children whose parents cannot or will not care for them due to substance abuse, illness and death, abuse and neglect, economic hardship, incarceration, divorce, domestic violence, and other family and community crises.

In response to the growing numbers of these kinship care families, state legislatures, public and private agencies, and grassroots coalitions in Kansas and across the country have begun to expand services and supports for children living with kin inside and outside of the foster care system.

A Look at the Numbers: Kinship Care in Kansas

The data below show the numbers of grandparents who are living in households with at least one grandchild under the age of 18, as well as the numbers of grandparents who are the primary caregivers for these grandchildren.

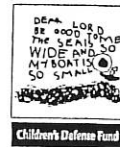
These numbers were reported by the 2000 U.S. Census and are available for every place (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau) in the country, including cities, towns, villages, and boroughs, on the U.S. Census website.*

	Grandparents Living in Households with One or More Own Grandchildren Under 18	Grandparents Responsible for Meeting the Basic Needs of Grandchildren
Location	#	#
United States	5,771,671	2,426,730
Kansas	35,274	17,873
Wichita city	5,949	3,303
Overland Park city	1,174	369
Kansas City city	4,643	2,210
Topeka city	1,888	931

*These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected Social Characteristics: 2000. The U.S. Census website is <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>. Detailed instructions on how to access this data can be found at http://www.casey.org/cnc/quick_facts/kinship_care_state_data.htm.



The Brookdale Foundation



Family Friends Fact Sheet

Supporting Grandparents as Parents

for more information call Leann Hochstetler 913-362-1899 or Rita Walker 913-299-4304

Background Information: Kinship care is a living arrangement in which a relative or another person who is emotionally close to a child takes on responsibility for raising that child. Factors such as parental substance abuse, incarceration, death, mental illness and abandonment are causing growing numbers of grandparents to step forward and keep families together. According to the 2000 US Census, nationally, there are **4.5 million children** under the age of 18 living in grandparent-maintained households. More than 2.4 million of these grandparents are primarily responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren.

Many more children are placed in the home of a grandparent informally, outside of the auspices of the child welfare system. According to the National Survey of American Families (NSAF), the number of informal kinship placements is approximately **one and a half times greater** than the number of formalized kin care placements. These families are not eligible for the same monetary compensation and services that formal kinship caregivers receive. **If even half of this group of children were to enter the formal foster care system, it would cost taxpayers approximately \$6.5 billion each year and completely overwhelm the system.**

Kansas Facts¹

37,546 children are currently living with their grandparents.

29,026 of those grandparents are the primary caregivers of their grandchildren.

21.9% percent of those families are currently in poverty.

Wyandotte County

2,301 children are being cared for by their grandparents.

Saline County

368 children are being cared for by their grandparents.

Shawnee County

2,622 children are being cared for by their grandparents.

Finney County

400 children are being cared for by their grandparents.

Johnson County

2,649 grandparents are responsible for their grandchildren, **56.9%** of them live in poverty.

While data on the number of families living in poverty was not available for all Kansas counties, national statistics show that more than half survive on incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level.

Why Legislation is Needed

► Virtually all child welfare agencies advocate for kin as the first placement choice when foster care is needed, resulting in 1 in 3 foster children being placed with their relatives. While research shows that these children benefit socially, academically, and behaviorally, it also puts significant pressure on the household.

- 1 in 4 children living in grandparent-headed households are impoverished
- 1 in 3 children living with grandparents do not have health insurance
- 50% of children in kinship foster care live in low-income households
- 4 out of 5 children in informal kinship placements receive no financial support

¹ U.S Census, Grandparent Caregivers in the United States, Kansas, Wyandotte, Saline, Shawnee, Johnson, and Finney Counties.

Alice Kitchen

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The Fiscal Benefits²

► **Retaining children in public foster care unnecessarily inflates the combined state and federal cost of care.**

■ **By providing subsidized guardianship programs, states can reduce the number of children in foster care:**

- In **Illinois**, the availability of subsidized guardianship led to permanent placements for 6,822 children over 5 years. Illinois reported estimated savings of \$6,000 per year per case.
- In **California's KinGap** program, the children in foster care decreased from 23,300 in 1999 to 13,300 in 2001. This was a 43% decline over just 2 years.
- **Massachusetts** reports saving \$10,000 per year on each case moved from foster care to guardianship.

■ **A reduction in administrative costs can also save states money and resources.**

- By moving children to guardianship placements, the child welfare system no longer has responsibility for providing case management, allowing staff resources to be reallocated or caseloads reduced.

■ **Reduced need for case monitoring by courts results in judicial savings**

■ **Reduced savings from administrative costs and moving children from foster care to guardianship placements can help offset the fiscal burden of providing the subsidy.**

What Other States are Doing

► **At least 34 states and the District of Columbia have established some kind of subsidized guardianship program allowing grandparents to become the legal guardian of the child in their care.** These programs are funded through a variety of sources including state funds, TANF dollars and Title IV-E. The breakdown is as follows:

- 11 use state funds
- 4 use a combination of state, TANF, or county funds
- 8 use TANF funds
- 7 use Title IV-E funding
- Missouri utilizes the state adoption subsidy funds along with Title IV E funding
- South Dakota uses a combination of federal Title XX social services block grant and state funds to fund its program

All of the states with IV-E waivers provide a monthly guardianship subsidy that is equal to or less than the current foster care payment, with approximately half of the cost borne by the federal government. Federal support through waivers helped states promote subsidized guardianship as a permanency option for grandparent caregivers

► **Three states have expanded their programs to provide financial support to relative caregivers who have not been in custody.**

- **Florida's** program started in 1998 and has served 13,983 children and uses TANF funds
- **Missouri's** "Grandparents as Foster Parents" program has served 2,472 children and uses TANF funds
- **Louisiana's** "Kinship Care Subsidy Program" serves 5,219 children and uses TANF funds

The evidence is clear: supporting grandparents as parents saves taxpayers money due to a reduction in costs associated with open foster care cases. However, while securing better outcomes at less cost is a compelling rationale, the true justification lies in the benefits for children and the families who have stepped up to care for them.

² Children and Family Research Center. (2004, October). *Fostering Results*. School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois.

Candace A. Nelson, Founder of G.O.G. (Guard Our Grandchildren)
5508 W. 61st St. Mission, KS 66202
913-262-2669 or 816-808-3554 (mobile)

Address to Senate Ways and Means Committee, February 3, 2005
Subject: Grandparents as Foster Parents Bill - SB320

Good Morning, Senators;

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today in support of ^{SB62} ~~SB320~~, the Grandparents as Foster Parents Bill.

I have been a writer for over 30 years, and in that time have written on a wide range of subjects and situations. In the past several years, after hearing the many stories from grandparents in Kansas, and after suffering my own personal disaster, I am in the process of founding the non-profit organization **Guard Our Grandchildren**, or **G.O.G.** The intention of **G.O.G.** is to bring public and legislative awareness to the role, and the struggles, of grandparents in America today.

Grandparents as Foster Parents is not a new idea. We have been fostering our children's children since the beginning of time. But what used to be cookie baking on the weekends, and long vacations in the summer, has rapidly evolved to change the role of Grandparenting in the lives of our grandchildren.

With societal changes like drug and alcohol abuse, and increasingly violent behavior, the need for grandparents to step into parental roles has never been greater. At the time of the 2000 Census, there were nearly 6 million grandchildren living with their grandparents, 42% - or nearly 3 million youngsters - were being raised by grandparents as their primary care givers. This number is only going to increase.

Grandparents have traditionally been the trusted stand-ins in cases of parental difficulties and breakdowns. We were the ones who were there to pick up the pieces of our children's and grandchildren's lives- happy to have helped our children get back on their feet.

But now we are being called to a higher duty. As the ones entrusted with passing down our family histories for eons, we are now being called into a greater battle. We are called to preserve, not only our history, but the future generations who will continue that history.

Yet, with all our commitment and love that we have for our children and grandchildren, the future of our families is being threatened like never before by the very entities that were put in place to provide protection. More often than not, state laws either do not support our efforts to continue the stable, loving relationships we have built with our grandchildren, or it is difficult to get new laws passed that will assist us in our endeavors to keep them. Oftentimes these laws are not complied with.

Four years ago, I found this to be true in my own life. I filled a parental role in my only grandchild's life from day one. His mother suffers from mental illness earmarked by rage and physical abuse, his father, a convicted burglar and alcoholic, abandoned the boy when he was barely three- years old. So I stepped up to the plate. I put his needs first because someone had to. I left my home in Oregon to return to Kansas, so I could continue to provide him with the security he needed. I provided his clothing, his food, and his medical care. I taught him his family's history, and brought art and culture into his life. I also taught him to ride his bicycle, how to identify wild animal tracks, listen to bird calls, and watch the moon rise through his telescope. I instilled in him an intense love of science and learning, and an appreciation for people of all races. And I always provided him with his own room in my home - his own safe haven- a place where he could retreat from the chaos that was forced upon his life.

When he was five years old, the State of Kansas, upon declaring him a child-in-need of-care, due to physical abuse by his mother, took custody of him. Recognizing that I had been the only stabilizing, loving force in his life, they placed him with me. My grandson told social workers and the guardian ad litem that he had always considered my house his real home, and it was where he wanted to live forever. But it

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didn't happen that way. At the instigation of a Kaw Valley social worker -eager to pay me back for calling her superiors when she broke the case plan agreement - my Grandson was stolen away from me one day when he was at pre-school. I had no idea where he had been taken, if he was safe, or if we would ever see each other again. I received no notice and no hearing, as law dictates. Just two social workers showing up as I was on my way out the door to pick him up. This social worker made up egregious lies about me- unproven and undocumented- to which I never had an opportunity to rebut. Before I knew it, I was the one being forced to have supervised visits and tape-recorded phone calls. Suddenly, I was gone from this little boy's life, and so too, was the promise of a loving home that he was so sure he would have from then on.

It is hard to believe after hearing my story and the story of the others here, that the State of Kansas cares anything about the continuity of care in our grandchildren's lives. As grandparents, we feel we have been targeted as enemies of the state. We don't like the inference, but we also will not be intimidated, nor will we back away from what we know to be in the best interest of our grandchildren.

Before you sits a small battalion of soldiers- just a fraction of the army that is growing outside this great hall. We are battle-scarred and war-weary, but we will not give up on our grandchildren or on the future of our generations. Until now, we have been a silent army, but as we gather in both strength and numbers, our collective voice will grow louder. As the largest voting population to ever inhabit this land, we are uniting to shout for the *ethical and humane treatment* of all children, who are forced to be victims of violence and neglect at their parents hands, and then made to suffer the unspeakable crime of removal from their extended family homes.

While these little ones are removed from their homes where many have known violence, instead of nurture; chaos, instead of peace; rage, instead of love; we, their Grandparents will continue to struggle on their behalf to provide and care for them. While these precious children-of-our-children are removed from degrading and often dangerous environments, where they sometimes suffer, not only broken bones, but broken hearts, I emphatically state on their behalf, that they *should not*, and with your sound wisdom and concern, *will not*, be removed from their family nest, nor be forced to lose hope to continue their family's generations into the future.

SB62

We are, and have always been, our grandchildren's *fostering parents*. As a citizen and a voter, I encourage my elected officials to vote ~~SB320~~ SB62 into law in a swift manner, thus ensuring our grandchildren the continuity of care they deserve by allowing them to reside in the homes of their grandparents. By recognizing grandparents as foster parents, you will not only be giving us the financial assistance to care for our grandchildren, you will be helping thousands of children to have the least restrictive, least traumatic removal from their parental homes, ensuring them the best promise for a loving, healthy future.

Thank you. I would be glad to answer any questions you may have for me.

Respectfully,

Candace A. Nelson

2/2/2005

My husband, Chuck, and I have raised our six-year old granddaughter since she was eighteen months old. There are many adjustments to be made when a child comes unexpectedly into a home with people who are in their fifties, people who thought their time and finances were their own to consider. There are many grandparents older than us who are raising one or more grandchildren. Our granddaughter came to us as a result of drug abuse by both parents; she had actually been abandoned by her father months before. She is one of five siblings, each with a different father, and her mother right now is only raising her three-year old brother.

Because of some cash assistance from the State of Kansas we can afford to pay for her to take a weekly dance class and hope to enroll her in Karate classes for her to learn self-control and self-discipline. Because she has anger and defiance issues she sees a child therapist once a week; our insurance does not pay for that. Shoes, food, toys and clothing now have to be provided for a little person. I've become an expert garage sale and thrift store shopper but as she gets older it is more difficult to find clothes in her size. She has had a lot of illness since she started Kindergarten - almost weekly trips to the doctor. Some of them require a co-pay because they don't accept Medicaid. Now my daughter is challenging the guardianship; it will cost us thousands of dollars to have our day in court. Baby sitters are both hard to find and expensive so my husband and I have little time just for us.

I am a grandparent mobilizer; my job is to facilitate a support group for grandparents raising their grandchildren and to publicize information about the help that is available for those in this situation. Some of the people I've met include a 68-year old grandmother who raises four grandchildren, two of whom have special needs, ADHD, high cholesterol, kidney stones, etc. Their father is an abusive alcoholic and their mother is mentally unstable. The grandmother tries to provide activities in sports, scouting, etc. all of which cost a lot of money. School lunches alone are \$50.00 a month. Another grandmother is 59 years old, single and on disability. She has been raising her granddaughter (now 5 years old) for two years. One couple is raising two small girls and has had them since birth. They had to give up a business to be home with these children.

There are many more stories of grandparents who chose to raise their grandchildren rather than put them in foster care or place them up for adoption, making that same great sacrifice. There should be resources readily available to meet the financial and emotional needs of these courageous families and that is the reason I encourage you to vote for this bill.

Thank you,
Leann Hochstetler
3600 W 47th Place
Roeland Park, Kansas
66205

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Phyllis Smith

I stand here before you today, a grandparent thrust into the role of a parent. I really was not aware of the vast number of grandparents that have assumed the roles of parent until I assumed the role myself. My role began six years ago with a 5-month-old infant boy and a 7-year-old girl, who are now 6 and 13. It was to be a temporary situation until their mother could "get on her feet." Drugs, prostitution, lack of responsibility, lack of education, illness, low self esteem, no self esteem and no self respect I imagine are many other reasons for this role being taken on.

Whatever the reason, it is a harsh fact many, if not all are placed in a very difficult position. Financial hardships and burdens, as well as mental stress and anguish are part of the role. Many are on fixed incomes. If it weren't for grandparents, there would be little or no hope for these children.

These innocent little people who are victims of their circumstances require a lot. Not just the basics, food clothing and shelter. They deserve to be loved and nurtured. There needs to be more resources available to the grandparent's not just financial support, but other support services. Parenting skills need polishing, counseling services should be available for both the grandparents and child or children. I am probably one of the more fortunate and blessed grandparents in many ways, but have come in contact with so many who need so much.

So, today, I speak for them as well, and ask that you consider Senate Bill #62. The passing of this Bill would make available many resources essential to "Grandparents."

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Good morning, my name is Alma Smith. I have 4 grandchildren that I have been taking care of for a few years by myself. My grandchildren ages are 8, 6, 3, and 2. Their parents were both incarcerated. Sometimes it has been a struggle both physically and financially to take care of all of their needs. I have had a stroke and bypass surgery. I receive social security so I am on a fixed income that was hard for 1 but now I must provide for 4 growing children. The bare essentials are all I am able to provide, and I do mean bare!

Utilities are very expensive especially gas this winter. Everything seems to increase but my check.

Medicaid is cutting back for their medical care. My grandson has Eczema and his medical card does not cover his medication. I continue to shop as frugally as possible but I can't keep up let alone catch up. But we keep going with God's grace. My grandson has Eczema and his medical card does not cover his medication. I continue to shop as frugally as possible but it is a hardship.

Please consider me and all the grandparents that have taken on this task of rearing their grandchildren when you are voting on Bill number 62. We are definitely counting on you!

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Good morning, my name is Bessie Barnes. I am a very active grandparent raising two very active grandsons. My son is in the service, and my daughter has had medical problems. This is how my role changed from grandparent to parent. My grandson's are 7 and 8 years old.

My circumstances I am certain are better than most, but that does not lessen the responsibilities I have. I planned my retirement very carefully. Never did I plan for the responsibilities of 2 additional mouths to feed, or bodies to clothe. I shop for the children at secondhand stores and catch the sales. It is a necessities otherwise my income for one would not be able to stretch for three. There are times that even bargain shopping is not enough. Recognizing that I would be on a fixed income I planned for a comfortable retirement. I was thrifty and sacrificed. There is plenty of stress to go around. And the financial burden could never out weigh the joy when their expectations of their challenges are accomplished.

But the hardship couldn't greatly be decreased if you would consider us the Grandparents that have taken on the responsibility of raising our grandchildren. We seek your help now! It is vital that you understand how important this bill #62 is to the grandparents.

Thank you for your time and please remember.

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Joyce Strickland
12420 Craig St.
Overland Park Ks. 66213

Just a little about my self. I am a single grandmother raising a grandchild, I have experience as a foster parent for 15 years and presently I am an intensive in-home specialist in Missouri and a full time student at KU working on my MSW. I made the choice to raise my granddaughter, because this child has a disability that could not be addressed in counseling in South Dakota. My granddaughter has been in therapy for 5 years and has made positive changes in her life. I would say 95% percent of the time her behavior is a normal 13 year old child.

My objective is to advocate for the other grandparents 17,873 in the state of Kansas. Grandparents raising grandchildren isn't anything new; it recently has become the focus of the public (Hetzog, Kleiner, and Tag) There has been an increase in grandparents/kinship placements in the last 10 years, due to the restructuring of the temporary assistance to needy families (KS. TAF) Many grandparents that have applied for assistance have been turned down, even when apply for the "Child Only". Recently I meet with SRS workers in the Johnson county office and the muddy water was made clear. When grandparents take on there grandchildren there may be the issue of one of the absent parent is still reciveing child support from the other parent making it impossible for the grandparents to receive assistance, because it shows up in the date base that this child is already receiving assistance.

May be we need to go back to 1909 when President Theodore Roosevelt designed Aide to Families with Dependent Children Welfare Reform for mothers that have been widowed or deserted. Now it is time to make changes for the children that have been deserted by their parents and left in the care of grandparents/relatives.

It is important to keep children with relative than sending them off to foster care that is so overly crowded making it impossible to give the proper attention to each case. I have been a foster parent and have empathy for the children that can't be placed with family member for numerous reasons. But for the relatives that can take the children I feel that it is important that they have assistance to help raise their grandchildren. If you look at the cost of raising a child and it doesn't really matter what age the grandparent or relative is, just taking on an extra child (ren) becomes a financial hardship. In a recent case of mine for my internship in Kansas it has come to my attention that a child has been removed from his parent's home and placed with a relative. It has been less than a year, but at this time because the relative doesn't receive any assistance from the State of Kansas and what child support she receives from the family which is court ordered. Has placed a finaical burden on the relative and her family. The relative now wants the child place in the foster care because she feel that she can no longer can care for the child because of the financial burden. This will mean another loss to this young child which at his age could create attachment disorders. If the parent's rights are terminated and the child is then placed into an adoption home, another loss and change, which will put the adoption at risk for disruption.

Censes data show that 48% of grandparent caregivers rang in the age of 50 to 64 33% under the age of 50 and 19% over the age of 65. Many of the grandparents that are in the 19% have had to come out of retirement and re-enter the work forces. Even at the age of 50 + and the pace that I keep with my own schedule and my granddaughters I don't know how someone over 65 manages. Even though we feel rising active grandchildren keep us young attimes I feel 90.

Changes need to be made so that children that are palced with grandparents/relatives that they have the opportunity to succed in life with out having to stuggle as they grow up fianiancally or being moved from home to home in our overly crowedd foster care system. Giving grandparents/relatives finical assistance is a good start.

Thank you for allowing me to have this time to speak for other grandparents/ relatives

*Senate Ways and Means
2-03-05
Attachment 16*

I am a 50- year- old widowed woman with 34 grandchildren, raising 11 grandchildren, blessed with 5 children, 3 of my 5 are raising and supporting their own. The other 2 are not able in their state of being to properly take care of theirs.

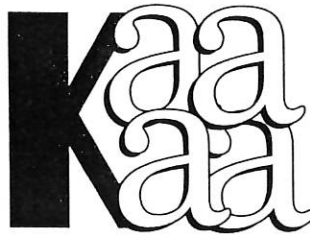
I chose to raise my grandchildren and not let them become part of the system. I could have let them be split up and placed into foster care but I feel as though there is a time in our lives to set aside self and think about grandchildren. A lot of people have suggested that it is not my responsibility to raise them. I believe that all children are all of our responsibility as adults. It just happen that I am also accepting the responsibility of raising my own grandchildren. No it is not always easy and in fact it is hardly ever easy life isn't fair. My grandchildren do not have many material things. But they do have a stable environment. There is always food (it may not be what they want) the utilities are on and they have shelter but foremost they have plenty of love. My prayer is the struggle will prove to be worthy. I just think that it could be better if people understood that by us stepping to the plate we have saved not only our grandchildren but also tax payers.

The cost to raise a child in the system is quite high. All that we ask is for a little assistance for necessities for the children we are raising. I pray that you will consider us when making your decisions in the future

Margo Moore

Senate Ways and Means
2-03-05
Attachment 17

THE
KANSAS
AREA AGENCIES
ON AGING
ASSOCIATION



Meeting the Needs of Older Kansans

1720 SW TOPEKA BOULEVARD • TOPEKA, KS 66612 • 785-235-8734 • FAX - 785-235-8747

To: Senate Ways and Means Committee
From: Craig Kaberline, Executive Director, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association
Date: February 3, 2005

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 62

Chairman Umbarger and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding Senate Bill 62. My name is Craig Kaberline and I am the executive director of the Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association (K4A). K4A's mission is to work to improve services and supports for all older Kansans and their caregivers. K4A represents all eleven Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) who provide information and coordinate services for seniors in all 105 counties of Kansas.

I write this testimony of behalf of the Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association to support of Senate Bill 62, enacting the grandparents as foster parents act.

K4A believes this is a very good and important piece of legislation for Kansas seniors, especially as more and more grandparents are raising their grandchildren in Kansas and around the country. There are grandparents who are struggling to make it financially themselves. But they also want to make sure that their grandchildren remain within the family. For some low-income seniors this assistance may mean the difference in being able to properly care for their grandchild and the grandchild going into the state foster care system.

We believe this bill creates a win-win-win situation. It is a win for the state because with some assistance grandparents may keep the child from entering the state foster care system. It is a win for the grandparents because it allows them the assistance necessary to take care of the grandchild and keep them in the family. And most importantly it is a win for the child, who has the opportunity to stay within their family, have stability in their life and not enter into the state system.

We thank you for your commitment to children and older Kansans. We ask for your support of Senate Bill 62.

AREA AGENCIES ON AGING:

CENTRAL PLAINS • EAST CENTRAL KANSAS • JAYHAWK • JOHNSON COUNTY • NORTH CENTRAL - FL
NORTHWEST KANSAS • SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS • SOUTHEAST KANSAS • SOUTHWEST KANSAS •
e-mail: k4aed@hotmail.com

*Senate Ways and Means
2-03-05
Attachment 18*