

# United Methodist Youthville

## Child Welfare Services

*Testimony in Support of SB 52*



# Youthville

**Giving Children Back Their Childhood**

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Senate Judiciary

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Attachment 18

Chairman Owens and Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity today to testify in support of SB 52. While currently grandparents have the right to request to be an interested party in a child in need of care (CINC) proceeding, we hear repeatedly that grandparents are unaware that they need to make this request of the court, or simply fail to make this request. By not making the request of the court, grandparents are not automatically notified of all upcoming hearings and other official notifications in the case. We believe that loving grandparents should be able to play an active part in the lives of their grandchildren and are often wonderful resources in helping the child exit the system and move toward permanency.

We strongly support grandparents being granted automatic interested party status by the court, unless as stated in the bill, the court believes it would not be in the best interest of the child to grant the grandparents this status. We believe this change may eliminate some of the concerns we hear from grandparents about not receiving notifications regarding upcoming court hearings and will alleviate the need for them to make this request of the court. This bill along with others (SB 81, SB 84, and SB 94), which we hope will also be passed this session, will provide improvements for families who become involved with the child welfare system.