

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the existence of an emergency, with respect to the need to allow the Grandparent Caregivers Program subsidy to be transferred to a relative caregiver when a grandparent is no longer able to care for the child.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Grandparent Caregivers Program Subsidy Transfer Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2014”.

Sec. 2. (a) There exists an immediate need to allow a grandparent caregiver subsidy to be transferred to a relative caregiver when a grandparent is no longer able to care for the child.

(b) The Grandparent Caregivers Program (“GCP”) provides a monthly stipend to eligible District of Columbia residents with low incomes to help raise their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great nieces, or great nephews. Caregivers use the financial assistance to help care for child relatives residing with them. The GCP is unique local legislation with the intent of keeping children out of foster care when a family member is willing to step forward, but needs financial help to do so. In 2013, the program served 449 households with 685 children.

(c) The District of Columbia’s Child and Family Services Agency (“CFSA”) has encountered cases where a current elderly caregiver has become unable to provide care to

1 a child because of failing mental or physical health, or because of passing away. If other
2 relatives do not step forward immediately and express interest in caring for the child, the
3 child is left vulnerable and is at risk of entering foster care. If other family members
4 remain willing to care for the child but also need the financial support to do so, it makes
5 good sense to allow the GCP subsidy to be transferred to them. Continuing the subsidy
6 remains true to the intent of the law which is to keep children from being placed in foster
7 care. Continuing the subsidy also prevents children from the trauma of entering foster
8 care, and strengthens the safety net in place for these children. In addition to the
9 emotional benefit of keeping children within a family, the GCP subsidy is far more cost
10 effective than foster care.

11 (d) This emergency legislation would allow the GCP subsidy to be transferred to
12 another relative who is related to the child by blood, marriage, domestic partnership,
13 adoption or is a godparent of the child, and is willing to be the permanent caregiver. The
14 transfer of the GCP subsidy allowed by this emergency legislation would help divert
15 children from entering foster care, and would support families remaining intact. The
16 legislation will further CFSA's efforts in building a robust service delivery system that
17 supports maintaining the urgency for keeping families together and children out of foster
18 care.

19 (e) As it is currently not legally possible for a subsidy to be transferred to another
20 class of family caregivers, this emergency legislation is required to avoid the potential
21 hardship and psychological trauma caused by a child needing to enter foster care.

22 (f) This emergency legislation has the potential to help any of the four hundred
23 plus children in the program, if and when their current elderly caretaker becomes unable

1 to continue caring for them. As this situation is ever present, this legislation is being
2 moved as an emergency so that no child would be forced to face the threat of foster care,
3 should their current caretaker becomes ill or pass away. The placement of even one child
4 in the foster care system when the far superior alternative of being able to continue to live
5 with a loving family member is available, would certainly adversely affect the child's
6 health, welfare, and economic well-being.

7 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the
8 circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it
9 necessary that the "Grandparent Caregivers Program Subsidy Transfer Emergency
10 Amendment Act of 2014" be adopted after a single reading.

11 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.