



103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

SB1278

Introduced 2/3/2023, by Sen. Kimberly A. Lightford

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Task Force on Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren to conduct public hearings throughout the State regarding services needed by and available to grandparents raising their grandchildren. Provides that the Task Force shall be comprised of 10 appointed members of the General Assembly who shall serve without compensation. Requires the Department on Aging, in collaboration with the Departments of Children and Family Services, Healthcare and Family Services, and Human Services and any other relevant agencies, to issue a report to the Task Force by July 1, 2023 that assesses existing State and federal assistance programs that include the following: (1) a review of all guaranteed benefits and other available support provided to grandparents through the Department of Children and Family Services' foster care program, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Covering ALL KIDS Health Insurance program, and other relevant programs; (2) a review of all guaranteed benefits and other available support provided to grandparents through the Department of Human Services' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and other relevant programs; (3) a review of all other means of grandparent-related support provided by State-funded and federally funded programs; and (4) the estimated cost to the State if grandparents were not willing to or refused to take custody of and raise their grandchildren. Requires the Task Force to submit a report to the General Assembly no later than January 1, 2024 that makes recommendations on changes that should be made to services provided to grandparents raising their grandchildren through the foster care and TANF "child-only" grant programs. Effective immediately.

LRB103 29994 KTG 56414 b

1 AN ACT concerning grandparent caregiver.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Task
5 Force on Grandparents Raising their Grandchildren Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds the
7 following:

8 (1) In Illinois, over 200,000 children under the age
9 of 18 are living with and being cared for by more than
10 100,000 grandparents.

11 (2) Grandparent caregivers, the majority of whom are
12 single women ranging in age from 30 to 90 with an average
13 annual income of \$15,000 to \$25,000, typically raise one
14 to 2 grandchildren and have been doing so for 5 years or
15 longer.

16 (3) Factors contributing to the growing number of
17 grandparents raising grandchildren include, but are not
18 limited to, alcohol and drug abuse, neglect, abuse,
19 abandonment, death of a parent, HIV/AIDS, divorce,
20 unemployment, poverty, parental incarceration, teen
21 pregnancy, and welfare reform.

22 (4) Due to their assumed caregiving responsibilities,
23 many grandparents deplete their savings and retirement

1 income and face severe financial risk and economic strains
2 while struggling to pay for expenses related to caring for
3 their grandchildren, such as, but not limited to, food,
4 diapers, clothing, child care, medical treatment, legal
5 assistance, and housing needs.

6 (5) Many grandparents take custody of and raise their
7 grandchildren after a harmful incident has been suffered
8 by their grandchildren that has caused the Department of
9 Children and Family Services to designate them to be "at
10 risk".

11 (6) Many other grandparents take preventive measures
12 by choosing to take custody of and raise their
13 grandchildren prior to their grandchildren suffering a
14 harmful incident when they recognize that their
15 grandchildren's health, safety, and welfare are at risk.

16 (7) Grandparents who take custody of their
17 grandchildren prior to the grandchildren's suffering of a
18 harmful incident are ineligible for foster care funding
19 and assistance from the Department of Children and Family
20 Services.

21 (8) The only financial assistance option for this
22 group of grandparents is "child only" grants from the
23 Department of Human Services' Temporary Assistance to
24 Needy Families (TANF) program.

25 (9) The Department of Children and Family Services'
26 foster care program provides monthly financial assistance

1 that is 3 to 4 times greater than the TANF "child only"
2 grants, and it also provides counseling, child care
3 support, education services, college scholarships, and
4 health services.

5 (10) Grandparents raising grandchildren who are not in
6 the foster care program are as valuable to the
7 grandchildren and to the State as those who are in the
8 foster care program.

9 (11) A significant function of government is to
10 promote the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens.

11 Section 10. Task Force on Grandparents Raising their
12 Grandchildren.

13 (a) The Task Force on Grandparents Raising their
14 Grandchildren is created and shall be comprised of 10 members
15 of the General Assembly appointed as follows:

16 (1) Three members of the Senate, one of whom shall be
17 co-chairperson, appointed by the President of the Senate.

18 (2) Two members of the Senate appointed by the
19 Minority Leader of the Senate.

20 (3) Three members of the House of Representatives, one
21 of whom shall be co-chairperson, appointed by the Speaker
22 of the House of Representatives.

23 (4) Two members of the House of Representatives
24 appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
25 Representatives.

1 (b) Task Force members shall serve without compensation.
2 The Department on Aging shall provide administrative support
3 to the Task Force.

4 Section 15. Agency reports. The Department on Aging, in
5 collaboration with the Departments of Children and Family
6 Services, Healthcare and Family Services, and Human Services
7 and any other relevant agencies, shall issue a report to the
8 Task Force no later than July 1, 2023 that assesses existing
9 State and federal assistance programs, including the
10 following:

11 (1) a review of all guaranteed benefits and other
12 available support provided to grandparents through the
13 Department of Children and Family Services' foster care
14 program, including counseling, child care support,
15 education services, college scholarships, and health
16 services; the Children's Health Insurance Program; the
17 Covering ALL KIDS Health Insurance program; and other
18 relevant programs;

19 (2) a review of all guaranteed benefits and other
20 available support provided to grandparents through the
21 Department of Human Services' Temporary Assistance for
22 Needy Families (TANF) program and other relevant programs;

23 (3) a review of all other means of grandparent-related
24 support provided by State-funded and federally funded
25 programs; and

1 (4) the estimated cost to the State if grandparents
2 were not willing to or refused to take custody of and raise
3 their grandchildren.

4 Section 20. Public hearings. The Task Force shall hold
5 public hearings throughout the State regarding services needed
6 by and available to grandparents raising their grandchildren.

7 Section 25. Task Force reports. The Task Force shall issue
8 a report to the General Assembly no later than January 1, 2024
9 that makes recommendations on changes that should be made to
10 services provided to grandparents raising their grandchildren
11 through the foster care and TANF "child-only" grant programs.

12 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
13 becoming law.