

**SENATE . . . . . No. 988**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Julian Cyr*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to grandparents raising grandchildren.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Julian Cyr*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Cape and Islands*

**SENATE . . . . . No. 988**

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By Mr. Cyr, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 988) of Julian Cyr for legislation relative to grandparents raising grandchildren. The Judiciary.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 906 OF 2019-2020.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court  
(2021-2022)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act relative to grandparents raising grandchildren.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 215 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the  
2 following section:-

3 Section 64. The chief justice of the probate court, in consultation with the commissioner  
4 of the department of children families and the chair of the commission on the status of  
5 grandparents raising grandchildren, shall establish and promulgate rules for a children's court  
6 program for actions relative to guardianship, adoption, caregiver rights, unfit parents, child  
7 welfare or child protection within the probate court, subject to the approval of the supreme  
8 judicial court. The chief justice for administration and management shall supervise and establish  
9 standards for the implementation of such program and shall further implement a program of  
10 certification for all personnel of the children's court program.

11           The chief justice of the probate court shall establish a pilot children's court program  
12 within Barnstable County under his direct supervision. Under the pilot program, he shall be  
13 responsible to fund, coordinate, and evaluate activities of the probate court to screen and refer  
14 cases to the children's court program. The pilot program shall offer a kinship caregiver navigator  
15 to grandparents or other relatives that are involved in matters in the children's court program to  
16 reduce the likelihood of failed guardianships. The kinship caregiver navigator shall provide  
17 information and support to address the challenges and costs that relative caregivers face when  
18 providing care and financial support and navigating the child welfare and custody procedures  
19 associated with kinship caregiving, including but not limited to families impacted by substance  
20 misuse.

21           The chief justice of the probate court shall monitor and evaluate the cost, impact and  
22 effectiveness of activities undertaken to screen and refer cases to the children's court and report  
23 annually to the general court on his findings. The annual report should identify unmet needs and  
24 promising opportunities for additional screening and referral activities and recommend  
25 legislative actions required to implement these activities.