

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 694

Expressing support for the designation of September 2023 as “National Kinship Care Month”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE (for herself, Mr. BACON, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Ms. MACE, Ms. SCANLON, Mr. NUNN of Iowa, Ms. BROWN, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of September 2023 as “National Kinship Care Month”.

Whereas, in September 2023, “National Kinship Care Month” is observed;

Whereas kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing, and protection of children by grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or fictive kin caregivers who have a family relationship to the over 2,800,000 children living in a kinship care arrangement;

Whereas death, incarceration, disability, parental substance use, military deployment, and incarceration are a few reasons causing grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or fictive kin caregivers

to step forward to raise children they did not expect nor plan to raise;

Whereas nearly one-third (31 percent) of all children in out-of-home care in the United States are placed with relatives without a parent in the home, and there is considerable variation in that percentage across States, ranging from a low of 5 percent to a high of 46 percent in kinship care;

Whereas, nationally, more than 133,405 children in foster care are formally placed in kinship foster care and more than 2,667,000 additional children are supported by kin caregivers outside of the foster care system in informal kinship arrangements;

Whereas because there are approximately 20 children in informal kinship care arrangements for every 1 child in formal foster kinship care, grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or fictive kin caregivers keep the foster care system from being overwhelmed and save taxpayers more than \$4,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas kinship families comprised of grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, stepparents, or fictive kin are not provided the same level of assistance and support as children placed in nonrelative or nonkin foster care;

Whereas COVID–19 both heightened the challenges for existing kinship caregivers and created new kinship caregivers due to parents dying or becoming disabled due to the virus leaving behind children who have been taken in by their kinship families;

Whereas Black children make up 14 percent of all children in the United States but comprise over 25 percent of all

children raised by grandparents and 23 percent of all children in foster care;

Whereas American Indian/Alaska Native children make up 1 percent of all children in the United States but comprise over 8 percent of all children raised by grandparents and 2 percent of all children in foster care;

Whereas kinship care enables children—

- (1) to maintain family relationships and family heritage;
- (2) to remain in their community; and
- (3) to thrive;

Whereas research shows that living with relatives and fictive kin benefits children in a number of ways including—

- (1) kinship care minimizes trauma;
- (2) kinship placements improve behavioral and mental health outcomes;
- (3) kinship care promotes sibling and other family ties;
- (4) kinship families provide higher levels of permanency; and
- (5) kinship care reduces the risk of homelessness and criminal involvement by providing an important and emotionally sustaining bridge for older youth;

Whereas kinship caregivers report tremendous satisfaction in caring for and raising children but face substantial challenges in accessing resources they need to care for their families, to avoid living in poverty, and to prevent children from entering foster care;

Whereas much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs;

Whereas there are Federal child welfare laws recognizing kinship care, and more than 40 States and the District of Columbia have over 300 laws related to kinship caregiving, making it clear that kinship care is acknowledged as the nationally accepted term for grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or fictive kin caregivers who are successfully caring for and raising children;

Whereas over 40 States are implementing kinship navigator programs and services that support grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or fictive kin caregivers who are not foster parents;

Whereas the House of Representatives is proud to recognize the many kinship families in which children are raised by grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or fictive kin caregivers;

Whereas the House of Representatives wishes to honor the many grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, and fictive kin caregivers who throughout the history of the United States have provided loving homes for children to thrive;

Whereas National Kinship Care Month provides an opportunity to urge people in every State to join in recognizing and celebrating kinship families and the tradition of grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or fictive kin caregivers in the United States helping raise children; and

Whereas States are increasingly relying on grandparents, siblings, members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or fictive kin caregivers as foster parents, and are working to

increase the percentages of children in supported kinship foster families: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the designation of “National Kin-
3 ship Care Month”;

4 (2) encourages the Congress to enact policies to
5 improve the lives of vulnerable children by sup-
6 porting kinship families in the best interests of such
7 children;

8 (3) honors the commitment and dedication of
9 kinship caregivers and the advocates and allies who
10 work tirelessly to provide assistance and services to
11 kinship-caregiving families; and

12 (4) reaffirms the need to continue working to
13 improve the outcomes of all vulnerable children
14 through parts B and E of title IV of the Social Se-
15 curity Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and other pro-
16 grams designed—

17 (A) to support vulnerable families;

18 (B) to invest in prevention and reunifica-
19 tion services; and

20 (C) to ensure that grandparents, siblings,
21 members of Tribes, godparents, stepparents, or
22 fictive kin caregivers who take on the role of
23 kinship caregivers receive the necessary sup-

- 1 ports, including but not limited to Kinship Nav-
- 2 igator programs.

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