

Kansas Department of

# **Social and Rehabilitation Services**

Gary J. Daniels, Secretary

**House Federal and State Affairs Committee**  
January 25, 2006

**SB 62 - Grandparents as Caregivers**

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**SB 62 - Grandparents as Caregivers**

Chairman Edmonds and members of the committee, I am Gary Daniels, Secretary of SRS. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss SB 62 regarding grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. These grandparents play a significant role in the lives of their grandchildren, often at significant personal sacrifice.

SRS proposes the bill before the committee be modified as noted in the attachment and the title changed from Grandparents as Foster Parents to Grandparents as Caregivers. SB 62 in its current form is a bit misleading. Foster parents are individuals who are licensed to provide foster care, on a short term basis, to children in state custody. They are paid for providing this service at a rate established by the foster care contract provider. The proposed modifications to SB 62 provide for payment to grandparents caring for grandchildren who are not in state custody, for what could be extended periods of time. No license is required. Essentially, the proposed changes provide for a new assistance program for grandparents caring for grandchildren who are not in state custody.

In response to the SRS proposal for amendments to SB 62, the Governor incorporated funding for the program in her proposed FY 2007 budget. The amendments would allow grandparents who are age 50 or older and whose income does not exceed 100 percent of federal poverty level to access benefits of \$200 per month per child, up to a maximum of \$600 a month.

FY 2007 funding levels provide a six month program development period before implementing the program January 1, 2007. Among other things, the development period will be used to establish data tracking systems that will allow better projections of the number of program participants and provide more accurate mechanisms to project program funding requirements.

The program would use only state dollars. The primary reason is that use of federal dollars adds program complexity as well as funding constraints. Federal child welfare funds, for example, can not be used for this program unless the caregiver is a licensed foster home and the child is in state custody. A federal waiver of these requirements is not likely based on the experience of other states. In addition, use of federal funds may include meeting work participation requirements. This may be one reason why many grandparents do not apply for the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

The proposed modifications to SB 62 recognize the financial burden on grandparents who are caregivers and emphasizes the importance of supporting families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. I would be happy to respond to questions.