



General Assembly

January Session, 2003

**Committee Bill No. 5997**

LCO No. 4204

Referred to Committee on Select Committee on Children

Introduced by:  
(KID)

**AN ACT CONCERNING HOUSING SUBSIDIES FOR RELATIVE CAREGIVERS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17a-126 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):

3 (a) As used in this section, "relative caregiver" means a person who  
4 is caring for a child related to such person because the parent of the  
5 child has died or become otherwise unable to care for the child for  
6 reasons that make reunification with the parent not a viable option  
7 within the foreseeable future and "commissioner" means the  
8 Commissioner of Children and Families.

9 (b) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish a  
10 program of subsidized guardianship for the benefit of children in the  
11 care or custody of the commissioner who are living with relative  
12 caregivers and who have been in foster care or certified relative care  
13 for not less than eighteen months. The commissioner, within available  
14 appropriations, may establish a program of subsidized guardianship  
15 for the benefit of children in the care or custody of the commissioner

16 who are living with relative caregivers and who have been in foster  
17 care or certified relative care for not less than twelve but not more  
18 than eighteen months. [A relative caregiver may request a  
19 guardianship subsidy from the commissioner.] The commissioner,  
20 within available appropriations, shall provide a relative caregiver or  
21 legal guardian who is eligible for subsidized housing a housing  
22 subsidy. If adoption of the child by the relative caregiver is an option,  
23 the commissioner shall counsel the caregiver about the advantages and  
24 disadvantages of adoption and subsidized guardianship so that the  
25 decision by the relative caregiver to request a subsidized guardianship  
26 may be a fully informed one.

27 (c) The subsidized guardianship program shall provide the  
28 following subsidies for the benefit of any child in the care of a relative  
29 caregiver who has been appointed the guardian or coguardian of the  
30 child by any court of competent jurisdiction: (1) A special-need  
31 subsidy, which shall be a lump sum payment for one-time expenses  
32 resulting from the assumption of care of the child when no other  
33 resource is available to pay for such expense; and (2) a medical subsidy  
34 comparable to the medical subsidy to children in the subsidized  
35 adoption program if the child lacks private health insurance. The  
36 subsidized guardianship program shall also provide a monthly  
37 subsidy on behalf of the child payable to the relative caregiver that  
38 shall be equal to the prevailing foster care rate. The commissioner may  
39 establish an asset test for eligibility under the program.

40 (d) The commissioner shall adopt regulations in accordance with  
41 chapter 54 implementing the subsidized guardianship program  
42 established under this section. Such regulations shall require, as a  
43 prerequisite to payment of a guardianship subsidy for the benefit of a  
44 minor child, that a home study report be filed with the court having  
45 jurisdiction of the case of the minor within fifteen days of the request  
46 for a subsidy, provided that no such report shall be required to be filed  
47 if a report has previously been provided to the court or if the caregiver  
48 has been determined to be a certified relative caregiver by the

49 commissioner. The regulations shall also establish a procedure  
50 comparable to that for the subsidized adoption program to determine  
51 the types and amounts of subsidy to be granted by the commissioner  
52 as provided in subsection (c) of this section, for annual review of the  
53 subsidy as provided in subsection (e) of this section and for appeal  
54 from decisions by the commissioner denying, modifying or  
55 terminating such subsidies.

56 (e) The guardianship subsidy provided under this section shall  
57 continue until the child reaches the age of eighteen or the age of  
58 twenty-one if such child is in full time attendance at a secondary  
59 school, technical school or college or is in a state accredited job training  
60 program. Annually, the subsidized guardian shall submit to the  
61 commissioner a sworn statement that the child is still living with and  
62 receiving support from the guardian. The parent of any child receiving  
63 assistance through the subsidized guardianship program shall remain  
64 liable for the support of the child as required by the general statutes.

65 (f) A guardianship subsidy shall not be included in the calculation  
66 of household income in determining eligibility for benefits of the  
67 relative caregiver of the subsidized child or other persons living within  
68 the household of the relative caregiver.

69 (g) Payments for guardianship subsidies and for housing subsidies  
70 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be made from moneys  
71 available from any source to the commissioner for child welfare  
72 purposes. The commissioner shall develop and implement a plan that:  
73 (1) Maximizes use of the subsidized guardianship program to decrease  
74 the number of children in the legal custody of the Commissioner of  
75 Children and Families and to reduce the number of children who  
76 would otherwise be placed into foster care when there is a family  
77 member willing to provide care; (2) maximizes federal reimbursement  
78 for the costs of the subsidized guardianship program, provided  
79 whatever federal maximization method is employed shall not result in  
80 the relative caregiver of a child being subject to work requirements as a

81 condition of receipt of benefits for the child or the benefits restricted in  
82 time or scope other than as specified in subsection (c) of this section;  
83 and (3) ensures necessary transfers of funds between agencies and  
84 interagency coordination in program implementation. The  
85 Commissioner of Children and Families shall seek all federal waivers  
86 as are necessary and appropriate to implement this plan.

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| This act shall take effect as follows: |                        |
| Section 1                              | <i>October 1, 2003</i> |

**Statement of Purpose:**

To assist relative caregivers and legal guardians by providing such individuals with a housing subsidy.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*

Co-Sponsors: REP. CARTER, 7th Dist.

H.B. 5997