



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 169

January Session, 2005

* SB00169HS_APP032405 *

**AN ACT CONCERNING RESPITE SERVICES FOR GRANDPARENTS
AND OTHER RELATIVES CARING FOR MINOR CHILDREN.**

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

1 Section 1. Section 17a-98a of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2005*):

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, and
6 "respite services" means a scheduled period of relief from the ongoing
7 parental responsibilities assumed by relative caregivers, not to exceed
8 fourteen days per calendar year.

9 (b) The Commissioner of Children and Families, in consultation
10 with the Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a program to
11 provide respite services to a relative caregiver who has been appointed
12 guardian or coguardian of a child by any court of competent
13 jurisdiction. Respite services available under such program, may
14 include, but shall not be limited to, enrollment of a child cared for by a
15 relative caregiver in a summer camp program.

16 (c) The Department of Children and Families, in consultation with
17 the Departments of Social Services, Mental Health and Addiction
18 Services and Mental Retardation shall establish, within available

19 appropriations, a kinship [foster care] navigator program. Such
20 program shall ensure that: [when the department] (1) When the
21 Department of Children and Families determines that it is in the best
22 interest of the child to be placed with a relative for foster care, the
23 department shall inform the relative regarding procedures to become
24 licensed as a foster parent, and (2) grandparents and other relatives
25 caring for a child related to such persons are provided with
26 information on the array of state services and benefits for which they
27 may be eligible.

28 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force to
29 study the challenges faced by kinship caregivers in caring for children
30 related to such caregivers. The task force shall examine methods for
31 improving the interrelationship between state agencies, state courts,
32 local health and human services agencies and kinship caregivers. Such
33 study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of: (1)
34 Methods of improving access by kinship caregivers to state financial or
35 healthcare benefits for which they may be eligible; (2) methods of
36 improving access by kinship caregivers to local and community
37 services; (3) methods of improving the coordination of services
38 available to kinship caregivers; (4) the availability of parenting
39 education programs and other educational resources for kinship
40 caregivers; and (5) the availability of local and community support
41 groups for kinship caregivers.

42 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

43 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
44 one of whom shall be a participant in the state Grandparents Raising
45 Grandchildren program;

46 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one
47 of whom shall be a representative from a regional office of the 2-1-1
48 Infoline;

49 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
50 Representatives, who shall be an employee of a superior court for

51 juvenile matters;

52 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be
53 an employee of the regional children's court pilot program established
54 pursuant to section 45a-8a of the general statutes;

55 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
56 Representatives, who shall be an employee of a probate court located
57 in a municipality with a population of fifty thousand or more;

58 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be
59 an employee of a family services agency;

60 (7) The Commissioner of Social Services, or a regional administrator
61 of the department designated by the commissioner;

62 (8) The Commissioner of Children and Families, or a regional
63 administrator of the department designated by the commissioner;

64 (9) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or a
65 regional administrator of the department designated by the
66 commissioner;

67 (10) The Commissioner of Mental Retardation, or a regional
68 administrator of the department designated by the commissioner; and

69 (11) The Commissioner of Public Health, or a regional administrator
70 of the department designated by the commissioner.

71 (c) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1) or
72 (2) of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the General
73 Assembly.

74 (d) All appointments to the task force shall be made no later than
75 thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be
76 filled by the appointing authority.

77 (e) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president
78 pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task

79 force, from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons
80 shall schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held no
81 later than sixty days after the effective date of this section. The task
82 force shall meet quarterly or more often upon the call of the
83 chairpersons or a majority of its members.

84 (f) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
85 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human
86 services shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

87 (g) Not later than January 1, 2007, the task force shall submit a
88 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
89 statutes, on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing
90 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
91 relating to human services and public health and to the select
92 committee on children. The task force shall terminate on the date that
93 it submits such report or January 1, 2007, whichever is earlier.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2005</i>	17a-98a
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

HS

Joint Favorable Subst. C/R

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