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Connecticut General Assembly
Committee on Aging
Room 3000
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

February 25, 2014

RE: RAISED BILL 5224: AN ACT INCREASING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO
GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN

Dear Committee Members:

Connecticut Association of Foster & Adoptive Parents, Inc. ("CAFAP") endorses Raised Bill 5224 and asks that each committee member vote in its favor. As drafted, the legislation increases temporary family assistance to grandparents and other relatives raising children to 75% of the prevailing monthly foster care rate.

CAFAP supports foster and adoptive parents and relative caregivers statewide. The number of grandparents and other relatives raising children has increased significantly partly in response to Connecticut's current public policy of encouraging and assisting children committed to the care of Department of Children and Families ("DCF") to be cared for by relative family members and thereby avoiding traditional foster care placement. While working to keep children with family members is a positive goal, these families need practical and financial help to achieve that goal.

CAFAP's staff and assigned Buddy mentors talk daily to grandparents and other family members raising relative children. We often hear of the loving devotion to the children along with the daunting problems of needing to move to a larger apartment and other financial roadblocks to providing adequate food, clothing and shelter. Too often we hear of adults who must leave senior housing complexes or those facing the permanent decision to cash-in retirement plans or make other permanent financial hardships.

If Connecticut intends to actualize the conceptual goal of keeping families intact, financial resources must be adequately available to needy families.

Raised Bill 5224
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Please vote in favor of Raised Bill 5224 and support our state's needy families and children. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Margaret M. Doherty
Executive Director