

Testimony in Support of

HB 5290, AA Increasing Financial Assistance for Grandparents and Other Nonparent Relatives Who are Raising Children

**Aging Committee
February 25, 2016**

Good morning Senator Flexer, Representative Serra, and members of the committee. I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of Connecticut.

I urge your support of HB 6932.

Although I was not raised by my grandparents, there are many grandparents across the country who are doing just that. These families, however, face many challenges, especially when it comes to housing, education, health, legal assistance or custody, and the financial difficulties of raising a child—sometimes after retirement.

There were a reported 2.6 million grandparents who were responsible for their grandchildren nationwide in 2014, a number that is increasing. Of those grandparents, 21% lived below the poverty line, 58% were in the workforce, and 39% were over the age of 60. TANF is often the only source of financial support for these families outside the child welfare system.

In Connecticut alone, it is estimated that 5.6% of our state's children are raised by their grandparents. These grandparents are trying to raise their grandchildren in a healthy, supportive environment despite severe financial strains. Giving these individuals the support they need to raise their grandchildren can be critical for both grandparents and grandchildren. Having access to a form of financial assistance like TANF would be beneficial to many of these families.

I urge your support of this measure and the protections that it will provide to Connecticut families.

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