THE GRANDFAMILIES ACT

Lead sponsors: Senators Bob Casey (Pennsylvania), Sherrod Brown (Ohio), Tammy Baldwin (Wisconsin), Maggie Hassan (New Hampshire), Kirsten Gillibrand (New York)

In order to assist grandparents and other older relative caregivers, the Grandfamilies Act would:

- **Provide grandfamilies with greater access to Social Security child's benefits:** Currently, grandchildren raised by their grandparents can receive Social Security benefits under very limited circumstances. The bill updates the law so that relative children receive Social Security benefits when they:

    o Are under the legal custody of a relative that receives Social Security; OR
    o Have parents who passed away or became disabled and are being cared for by relatives who receive Social Security.

- **Make TANF cash assistance more accessible to grandfamilies:** The bill would make sure that work requirements, time limits and income do not stop grandfamilies (adults and children) from receiving cash assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. It also would help ensure that grandparents can apply for cash assistance even if they don't want the state to go after the child's parents for child support.

- **Provide supports for grandfamily housing:** The legislation would authorize funding for grandfamily housing coordinators to provide unique programming that give grandfamilies guidance and support in dealing with daily life activities and challenges.

- **Promote temporary guardianship laws:** The bill would encourage states to enact temporary guardianship laws so that older relative caretakers can make important decisions on the child's behalf.

- **Encourage states to develop plans to assist grandfamilies:** The legislation would authorize funding to help states develop plans that provide support and resources for grandparents raising grandchildren.

- **Create a National Technical Assistance Center on Grandfamilies:** The bill would establish a national center to develop, maintain and facilitate distribution of best practices to help handle issues unique to grandfamilies.