

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

The Grandfamily Housing Act – S. 2179

U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-Pennsylvania), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio)

Why do we need the Grandfamily Housing Act?

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) study found that **more than 2.7 million children** in the United States are being raised by grandparents and other relatives, also known as kinship caregivers – about 20 times more than those placed in foster care. While experts believe these numbers have climbed due to the opioid epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic, there is a long history of grandparents and other relatives stepping in to care for children when parents are unable.

Taking on a kinship caregiving role can come unexpectedly and with little help. Grandparents and other relatives often face challenges affording to raise a child, and may postpone retirement, find new housing, or deprioritize their own medical needs in order to pay for their new caregiving expenses. The pandemic has only exacerbated economic hardship and increased health concerns.

In fact, less than one-third of eligible grandfamilies receive housing assistance. The majority of subsidized and market-rate senior residences do not permit children to live in their buildings. As a result, **almost half** of every low-income renter in grandparent-headed households spends more than fifty percent (50%) of his or her income on rent. Grandparent-led households encounter many unique challenges. Grandparents raising grandchildren may struggle to plan financially to raise a child, prepare their home for a child and navigate school systems. Additionally, many grandparents are forced to spend down their savings to provide for their grandchildren, jeopardizing their own financial future.

What will the Grandfamily Housing Act do?

The Grandfamily Housing Act establishes a new nationwide pilot to modify appropriate housing and fund residential coordinators to help grandparents navigate the complexities of raising a grandchild. Specifically, the bill would:

- Help non-profits and local housing authorities provide a safe living space for grandfamilies;
- Help housing providers employ a Grandfamily Resident Service Coordinator;
- Build a stable environment for grandchildren; and
- Finance the upkeep and retrofitting of grandfamily housing and communal spaces.

Non-Profits, For-Profits, Public Housing, Section 202, and Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance Programs would be eligible for these grants.

This legislation is supported by Generations United, Leading Age and the National Council on Aging.