

# U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

## **The Grandfamily Housing Act**

*U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Susan Collins (R-ME), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH)*

### **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 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 COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated economic hardship and increased health concerns.

Fewer 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, which makes existing intergenerational housing units even more critical. However, few intergenerational housing programs have the support and resources to address the unique needs of grandfamilies. Grandparent-led households encounter many unique challenges, such as struggling 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 would establish a new nationwide grant program to enable housing providers to create stable living environments for grandfamilies and help grandparent caregivers navigate the complexities of raising a grandchild. Specifically, the bill would:

- Authorize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to award grants to non-profits and local housing authorities to finance the upkeep and retrofitting of intergenerational housing and communal spaces;
- Help housing providers employ a Grandfamily Resident Service Coordinator to offer onsite intergenerational services such as afterschool programming, tutoring, and health care services; and
- Enable housing providers to offer events for intergenerational families in the community.

Non-profits, for-profits, public housing, Section 202, and Section 8 project-based rental assistance programs would be eligible for these grants.