A BILL

To enact sections 5101.52, 5101.521, 5101.522, and 5101.523 of the Revised Code to establish a kinship caregivers' bill of rights and to make an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 5101.52, 5101.521, 5101.522, and 5101.523 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 5101.52. As used in sections 5101.521 to 5101.523, "kinship caregiver" has the same meaning as in section 5101.85 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5101.521. A kinship caregiver shall have rights to all of the following:

(A) Be treated with consideration and respect for personal dignity;

(B) Be actively informed of all available support mechanisms that a kinship caregiver may access, including information on all public or private agency policies and
procedures relating to kinship caregivers;

(C) Receive information on how to contact agency personnel on a seven-days-per-week, twenty-four-hours-per-day basis;

(D) Receive open, complete, and timely responses from any agency a kinship caregiver contacts;

(E) Receive, as a newly designated kinship caregiver, access to critical outreach services and orientation support;

(F) Receive full access to medical and mental health services for the children placed with the kinship caregiver;

(G) Receive access to childcare, without having to meet work requirements;

(H) Be treated equally for funding, resources, and services, regardless of whether the kinship care is provided through a formal or informal, or an adoptive, kinship caregiver placement;

(I) Be informed of, and receive access to, a child advocate for kinship care, of which one shall be appointed in every county in this state, with more advocates appointed for high-service counties;

(J) Receive priority for school choice, to provide stability and fewer disruptions to their school environment during transition;

(K) Receive additional resources for essential school supplies, uniforms and clothing, and other essential items for the domestic care of the child;

(L) Receive advanced notification of scheduled meetings concerning the child to actively participate and have input into
the case-planning and decision-making process regarding the child;

(M) Receive from an agency with responsibilities for the care of the child subject to kinship care all information about the child's medical history, general behaviors, and the relationships between the child and his or her biological parents, as soon as that information is obtained by the agency;

(N) Receive from an agency with responsibility for the care of the child subject to kinship care, within a reasonable amount of time, the information concerning the educational history, life experiences, and placement circumstances of the child;

(O) Be consulted in the development of the permanency plan;

(P) Be consulted in the decision to release the kinship caregiver's address to the child's parent, and shall be informed when such information has been shared;

(Q) Receive assistance with the coordination of services for dealing with family loss and separation when a child placed with a kinship caregiver leaves the kinship caregiver's home, when relocation is not the result of threat to the health and safety of the child caused by the kinship caregiver or member of the kinship caregiver's household;

(R) Have the opportunity to receive appropriate training without cost that will enhance the kinship caregiver's skills and abilities;

(S) Be subject to confidentiality requirements in accordance with division (I) of section 2141.421 of the Revised Code regarding a child abuse or neglect report involving a
kinship caregiver or a member of the kinship caregiver's household. Confidentiality requirements shall not interfere with the safety of the child;

(T) Be informed of, and have the opportunity to be heard regarding, agency decisions or practices. The agency shall not discharge, threaten, or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against a kinship caregiver for questioning the decisions or practices of the agency;

(U) Be informed of the process, established by the department of job and family services, for kinship caregivers to make complaints about agency discrimination or retaliation for questioning the agency's decisions or practices, in a reasonable amount of time.

Sec. 5101.522. A kinship caregiver shall have the right to be remunerated comparably to foster care providers and shall be reimbursed for expenses under divisions (F), (G), (H), (K), and (R) of section 5101.521 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5101.523. The director of job and family services shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code as necessary to implement sections 5101.521 and 5101.522 of the Revised Code.

Section 2. On the effective date of this section, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Director of Job and Family Services shall certify to the Director of Budget and Management the amount necessary to carry out the requirements of sections 5101.521 and 5101.522 of the Revised Code. The Director of Budget and Management shall transfer cash from the Budget Stabilization Fund, up to the amount certified without exceeding the balance of the the Budget Stabilization Fund, to the General
Revenue Fund. The amount transferred is hereby appropriated to appropriation item 600551, Job and Family Services Program Support, for the relevant fiscal year.

Within the limits set forth in this act, the Director of Budget and Management shall establish accounts indicating the source and amount of funds for each appropriation made in this act, and shall determine the form and manner in which appropriation accounts shall be maintained. Expenditures from appropriations contained in this act shall be accounted for as though made in the main operating appropriations act of the 133rd General Assembly.

The appropriations made in this act are subject to all provisions of H.B. 166 of the 133rd General Assembly that are generally applicable to such appropriations.