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**March 18, 2014 Testimony in front of the Ohio House
Subcommittee on Health and Human Services,
Quo Vadis Ellison, Former President of Cuyahoga County Family
Care Association**

Good morning Chairman Sprague and members of the House Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Quo Vadis Ellison and I am a kinship care provider. I am the former President and Founder of the Cuyahoga County Family Care Association. As a kinship provider for seventeen years, a foster parent for 36 years and the former president of the State's Foster Parents Association my testimony today is on behalf of the hundreds of kinship providers in the State of Ohio, including myself.

As you know, the number of kinship providers has increased significantly all over the country and in Ohio. Grandparents, aunts and uncles and sisters and brothers have become the caregivers for the minor children of a relative. Some of us have legal custody of the children, and some of us are permanent guardians. But, we are all kinship providers.

The State responded to the financial burdens faced by kinship providers by establishing incentives available through the Kinship Permanency Program. Effective 2005, new kinship providers became eligible for an initial incentive of \$525.00 per child followed by a maximum of 5 additional payments of \$300 each, all over a three (3) year period.

We are requesting two changes:

One, that all kinship providers, whether they became providers before or after 2005 and regardless of the legal status of the child(ren), be eligible for these financial payments:

and

Two, that these payments be made available throughout the placement period of our grandchildren, nieces, nephews or siblings. In this way we will be able to raise our minor relatives more successfully by providing them with clothing, shoes, school supplies, personal hygiene products, over the counter medical supplies and other necessities.

Thanks you for your consideration.