



## **Ohio Grandparent/ Kinship Coalition**

**Ohio's Statewide Kinship Navigator  
"Since 1998"**

*Where Your Voice is Heard!*

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March 24, 2025  
Testimony on S.B. 58

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today on S.B. 58.

My name is Latresse (Yaya) Lumpkin, and I am a kinship caregiver of 3 grandchildren and a member of and represent the Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition (OGKC). OGKC has been in existence since 2000 as the only statewide advocacy organization comprised of and advocating for kinship caregivers. OGKC is advocating for the provision of support for kinship families in S.B. 58. Kinship care is a temporary or permanent arrangement in which a relative or non-relative adult assumes full-time care of a child whose parents are unwilling or unable to care for them. Kinship care includes relationships established through an informal arrangement, legal custody or guardianship order, Power of Attorney, relative or non-relative foster care placement, or kinship adoption. Formal kinship arrangements are families who are involved with the child welfare system; approximately 4,000 statewide. Informal kinship arrangements make up most of the kinship families (200,000+ relatives and non-relatives) who are not involved with the child welfare system. Studies have shown that kinship care is the best option for a child who cannot remain with their parent.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2021 American Community Survey, 297,000 children live in relative caregiver homes in Ohio, which include grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, siblings, close family friends etc. In addition to the thousands of grandparents who are kinship caregivers without formal legal custody but have access to and use the Grandparent Power of Attorney (POA) and Caregiver Authorization Affidavit (CAA), there are thousands of kinship caregivers who do not have legal custody and cannot afford to pay the court costs to obtain legal custody of the children in their care.

The Grandparent POA allows a parent to give the caregiver, who has full-time responsibility of the child, the right to enroll the child in school, attend school meetings, obtain medical care and

other needs. The parent can revoke the POA at any time without court involvement. The CAA is completed by a caregiver when they do not know the whereabouts of the parents.

The (POA) and (CAA), which do not require financial resources to execute, are notarized and filed with the caregiver's county Juvenile Court, are an additional tool to help families achieve stability.

These documents give caregivers the authorization to be involved in and make decisions about the child's education and health care. Although Ohio was the first state to implement these documents, it is the only state in the nation that restricts the use of the POA and CAA to grandparents. The expansion of the POA and CAA is needed statewide for all kinship caregivers to use. It is for these reasons that supporting the needs of kinship families is so important. In the 20+ years that the Grandparent POA/CAA have been in use, there has been no indication that their use has been abused.

Along with doing what is best for children and their families, there is a financial benefit to the state and public agencies, which could not accommodate all the children in kinship care in the child welfare system, when children are placed in a kinship arrangement which is critical for the stability of the family, rather than the cost of a foster care placement.

OGKC is grateful to Senators Reynolds and Craig for introducing the provisions of the bill in support of kinship caregivers.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony today.

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