

Hello

My name is Lenora Lumpkin and I am a kinship caregiver of my 2 grandsons. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell my story to help understand why we as kinship caregivers need SB HB 110.

As I stated before I'm a kinship caregiver of my 2 grandchildren from Columbus, Ohio since August 18, 2018 and it hasn't been easy when they came to live with me. I had no beds for them, no clothes for them, no medical insurance for them and no food for them. When I tried to get help such as food stamps to feed them I was denied because of my income, when I tried to get childcare for them so I could continue to work I was once again denied causing me to take a 3month leave of absence from work sending me into a deep depression and seeking professional help because what was I supposed to do and how? My income was my income and it was for me and my household. I couldn't afford 200weekly on childcare. I couldn't afford food for them, I barely was eating myself. I worked therefore I would eat at work or buy a dollar hotdog and go home.

I quit my job on Oct 12, 2020 because of no childcare for my grandsons and I am currently living off 400 OWF that I get for my grandsons. I went from being employed bringing home 2000plus every two weeks to living off 400 a month. It hasn't been easy but I'm doing the best I can but not being able to work because I can't afford childcare isn't fair nor is living off 400 a month when my mortgage is 773.05 a month added more stress on me wondering if we are going to be homeless.

As a kinship caregiver of my 2 grandsons I am asking the legislature to allocate additional resources to kinship caregivers so that we can provide the children in our care the basic security and stability that they deserve. I am asking you to support SB HB 110 providing financial help to kinship caregivers. In this budget we need childcare and food stamps that are not based on our income to provide the quality of care for our grandchildren.

Increased the monthly amount of the OWF/TANF child only payment to 600 per child. Restore kinship caregiver support program from the current \$10million to \$15million per year to provide one-time stabilization short-term expenses. Provide funding for increased direct supports to families, such as mental health services, recreational needs, respite care, educational needs and affordable housing that's equal to the Ohio Kinship Adoption Navigator program funding. Implement the Gilison lawsuit requirements to pay the same rate as licensed foster parents for children in approved kinship homes.

Along with doing what is best for children and their families, there is a financial benefit to the public agencies when children are placed in a formal kinship arrangement rather than the cost of a foster care placement; and support for informal kinship arrangement is just as critical for the stability of the family.

Thank you very much for taking the time out to read my testimony. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely
Lenora Lumpkin
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