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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1397**

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**State of Washington**

**57th Legislature**

**2002 Regular Session**

**By** House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Tokuda, Boldt, Kagi, Benson, Kenney, Cody, Schual-Berke and Santos)

Read first time 02/04/2002. Referred to Committee on .

1 AN ACT Relating to children placed in the care of relatives; and  
2 creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that relatives  
5 increasingly are assuming the responsibility for raising the children  
6 of their loved ones. The parents of these children are unable to  
7 fulfill this responsibility themselves because of various and complex  
8 reasons.

9 The legislature recognizes that these kinship caregivers perform a  
10 vital function in our society by providing homes for children who would  
11 otherwise be at risk of foster care placement. These homes offer  
12 stability to children in crisis and enhance family reunification.  
13 Outcome data shows that children in the care of relatives are less  
14 likely to enter state custody, and most of these arrangements do not  
15 require intensive supervision of the placement by the courts or by the  
16 department of social and health services. The legislature recognizes  
17 that kinship care is a legitimate and important component in the  
18 spectrum of out-of-home placements available to children in need.

1 The legislature recognizes that these kinship caregivers face many  
2 difficulties and need assistance to support the health and well-being  
3 of the children they care for. These needs include, but are not  
4 limited to, legal assistance, respite care services, financial  
5 assistance, counseling, and other supportive services.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Within existing resources, the  
7 department of social and health services shall convene a kinship  
8 caregivers working group subsequent to the release in June 2002 of the  
9 kinship caregivers study being conducted by the Washington state  
10 institute for public policy. The working group shall comprise:

- 11 (a) The children's administration;
- 12 (b) The aging and adult services administration;
- 13 (c) The economic services administration;
- 14 (d) Kinship caregivers; and
- 15 (e) Other stakeholders, such as the grandparents' coalition.

16 (2) The kinship caregivers working group shall:

- 17 (a) Review the Washington state institute for public policy kinship  
18 caregivers study;
- 19 (b) Develop a briefing for the legislature that identifies:
  - 20 (i) The policy issues to be considered in making kinship care a  
21 robust component of the out-of-home placements spectrum;
  - 22 (ii) The federal and state statutes associated with these policy  
23 issues; and
  - 24 (iii) Options for addressing these policy issues; and
- 25 (c) Submit the briefing to the children and family services  
26 committee of the house of representatives by November 1, 2002.

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