



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1025		DATE: 2/25/2025	
COMMITTEE: Children and Families			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person		SUBMIT DATE: 2/25/2025 11:36 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I am in Support of this Bill and its intension that if both parents are deemed incompetent to be the parent of the child, that extreme measures are taken to see if the Grandparents are able and prepared to take custody of and raise their Grandchildren. This is a very important piece of Legislation.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: TIMOTHY FABER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: tfaber@mobaptist.org	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2025 4:41 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I support these two bills – HB381 and HB1025. Since the goal of Missouri is to unite families in the foster care system whenever possible it makes sense that the children be placed with their grandparents whenever possible, and that the parents be given priority in the placement process. First, the children already know their grandparents and so there is less disruption in their life. A sense of stability in the midst of all the other chaos they are experience is imperative in helping these children feel safe, loved, and provided for. Placement with strangers is more disruptive and gives the children a sense of not being wanted, which in turn will lead to greater emotional detachment and other issues the children will have to work to overcome later. Making grandparent the priority for custody whenever possible will also aid in the state's goal of family reunification. Grandparents can often serve as mediators between parents and their children, and often have an "ear" of their own children to make necessary changes that social workers and foster parents may not have. For instance, a grandparent can mention to their own kid that the grandchild was doing this or that in school and conversations about why their family is no longer intact, etc... Hearing from their own parent about their child's struggles can be a greater motivating factor to make better life choices and work harder for reunification. Third, placement with grandparents will likely be more cost effective for the state. In one sense, the children are more likely to be placed with the grandparents for the duration of their placement whereas children placed with strangers may be moved several times from one home to another. Each time a child is moved is not only more disruptive to the child, but it also costs the state in terms of more case load for the social workers, resulting in more stress and staff turnover, but also in the basic financial cost associated with each placement. Finally, grandparents are likely to provide better care for the children than strangers would. While most foster care parents do genuinely care about the kids they foster, they can never replace family. They cannot relate to the extended family and cannot provide the same sense of belonging. And when a child needs this or that for a school activity, or just because they are kids and should be "spoiled" once in a while, a grandparent is more likely to provide those little incidentals and not bill the state for it when other foster parents may not provide those little things to the same degree, or at all, ad if they do they may be more likely to bill the state for re-imbursement. Now obviously, the support for this bill is based on the phrase, already in the existing statute, that says "...deemed by the court to be suitable and able to provide an adequate and stable environment for the child." Grandparents should not be blindly granted priority, and it must be recognized that some grandparents are at least partially responsible for their grandchildren's parents being in a position where the kids need foster care to begin with. But as long as the grandparents are "suitable and able>>>" then giving them priority should be a no-brainer. Please vote "do pass" on HB381 and HB1165.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: AIMEE ROBERTSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: abaimerobertson@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2025 7:53 PM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANTHONY STEMATZ-BREITLING		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: stembreit@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/24/2025 6:09 PM
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I am against HB 1025, which would prioritize the grandparents if both parents are found to be unfit. For starters it is well known that abusive behavior and addictive tendencies often stem from previous generations -meaning that if the parents are unfit the grandparents could also be unfit. There are many situations where the grandparents should not be given priority. My mother found the way her parents raised her psychologically damaging and explicitly stated that she did not want them(my grandparents) to raise me in her will. My mother died when I was 10, the identity of my biological father is not known and she was not married to my other parent because of disability. My other parent did not have the funds to adopt me in the eyes of the law but regardless this was the individual who had raised me and cared for me since birth in more than equal measure to my biological mother. My grandparents strongly disliked Lee and later admitted they would have taken me if they could -it would have been extremely devastating to be taken away from the only parent I had left right after losing my mother. If this law had been in place at the time of my mothers death then my grandparents -the people my mother explicitly did not want to raise me, would have had priority over Lee -my still-living parent. Lee was not my parent biologically or legally but was still my parent in every other way. I would prefer this bill be voted down but if it is not then I strongly suggest that there is an addition to this bill that states a single parent can provide a prioritized list of who they would like to have custody of the children in their will and that the courts must respect this list rewarding custody to the first willing individual found fit to parent.