



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 381		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: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/25/2025 11:36 PM

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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: DINAH L TATMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: pastordinaht@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/25/2025 12:07 PM
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Dear Honorable Members of the Missouri House of Representatives and Senate,I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the vital work you do for our great state. Your efforts truly make a difference in the lives of many.I am Reverend Dinah Tatman, Mayor emeritus of the “Great City” Bellefontaine Neighbors. My husband Marvin and I have had the pleasure of calling Bellefontaine Neighbors home for 24 years. Our journey in ministry over the last 42 years has been deeply fulfilling. We mainly focus on supporting children and youth, especially those from single-parent families and those raised by their grandparents. The role of grandparents in a child's life is extraordinary. They create a nurturing atmosphere that fosters stability and emotional support, deepening family connections. This strong foundation enhances children's emotional well-being, facilitates social development, and cultivates a robust sense of identity.When children have the privilege of being cared for by their grandparents, they often thrive. In times of family upheaval, grandparents serve as a steady anchor, shielding children from emotional distress and promoting resilience. Living with grandparents fortifies family bonds and helps maintain cultural traditions, reinforcing a sense of belonging and identity.Furthermore, grandparents' love and support create a rich network of social interactions, significantly boosting a child's social skills and overall well-being. For those who have endured neglect or abuse, this nurturing presence can be a sanctuary, providing safety and healing.I encourage you to support HB381, sponsored by Representative Marlene Terry as we continue championing these vital family structures that uplift our children and fortify our communities.Sincerely, Mr. & Mrs. Marvin C. Tatman Jr. City of Bellefontaine Neighbors



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SUSAN GIBSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: Onesuegibson@protonmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/21/2025 9:57 PM
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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
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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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