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## Children & Family Services Committee

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### HB 1397

**Brief Description:** Creating the relative caregiver program.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Tokuda, Boldt, Kagi, Benson, Kenney, Cody, Schual-Berke and Santos.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- The Legislature recognizes the value of placing children, who are at risk of foster care placement, with relatives.
- The relative caregiver program is created. Qualified relatives are exempted from foster care licensing requirements.
- A caregiver benefit of at least \$100 per month is established for the second and each subsequent child placed with the relative.

**Hearing Date:** 1/31/02

**Staff:** Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

#### Background:

Children who need out of home placement because of abuse, abandonment or neglect may be placed with relatives. This placement may be through a formal process such as dependency or a voluntary agreement, or, it may be through an informal arrangement within the family.

Relatives may or may not choose to be licensed as foster homes. If the relative's home is licensed, the child's care is paid for through foster care funding, the child is eligible for Medicaid, and support services are available. Foster care rates vary with the age of the child; the rate for a child from birth up to age six is \$366 per month, per each child in placement.

If the relative's home is not licensed, the child's care is paid for through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants, Medicaid coverage is provided, and if the child was placed through a dependency action, support services are available. The TANF

grant for the first child, of any age, is \$349 per month. The grant is increased for each subsequent child placed by an increment of at least \$91 per child, per month.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Legislature recognizes the value of placing children, who are at risk of foster care placement, with relatives.

The relative caregiver program is created. Qualified relatives are exempted from foster care licensing requirements.

A caregiver benefit of at least \$100 per month is established for the second and each subsequent child placed with the relative. Within available funding, relatives will receive a range of support services.

The bill makes explicit that children living with relative caregivers are eligible for Medicaid.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.