

1397-S

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

Brief Description: Encouraging support services for kinship  
caregivers.

**HB 1397-S - DIGEST**

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Recognizes that relatives increasingly are assuming the responsibility for raising the children of their loved ones. The parents of these children are unable to fulfill this responsibility themselves because of various and complex reasons.

Recognizes that these kinship caregivers perform a vital function in our society by providing homes for children who would otherwise be at risk of foster care placement.

Recognizes that kinship care is a legitimate and important component in the spectrum of out-of-home placements available to children in need.

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

Provides that, within existing resources, the department of social and health services shall convene a kinship caregivers working group subsequent to the release in June 2002 of the kinship caregivers study being conducted by the Washington state institute for public policy.

Requires the kinship caregivers working group to: (1) Review the Washington state institute for public policy kinship caregivers study;

(2) Develop a briefing for the legislature that identifies and prioritizes: (a) The policy issues to be considered in making kinship care a robust component of the out-of-home placements spectrum including consideration of a financial means test;

(b) The federal and state statutes associated with these policy issues;

(c) Options for addressing these policy issues; and

(d) Submit the briefing to the appropriate committees in the senate and house of representatives by November 1, 2002.