

- SUBJECT:** Expanding eligibility for TANF one-time payments
- COMMITTEE:** Human Services — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Raymond, Frank, Keough, Miller, Minjarez, Swanson, Wu
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Klick, Rose
- WITNESSES:** For — Mary Moreno, Families Helping Families; Katherine Barillas, One Voice Texas; Kathryn Freeman, Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission; Patricia Hogue, Texas Lawyers for Children; Mercedes Bristol; Delia Martinez; Jesse Moreno; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Anne Dunkelberg, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Melissa Shannon, County of Bexar Commissioners Court; Charles Reed, Dallas County Commissioners Court; Sebastien Laroche, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Kate Murphy, Texans Care for Children; Sarah Crockett, Texas CASA; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Pamela McPeters, TexProtects (Texas Association for the Protection of Children); Knox Kimberly, Upbring)
- Against — None
- On — Gina Perez, Health and Human Services Commission; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Elizabeth "Liz" Kromrei, Department of Family and Protective Services)
- BACKGROUND:** Human Resources Code, sec. 31.0041 authorizes the Health and Human Services Commission, if funds are available, to provide a \$1,000 one-time payment under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to a grandparent who is the primary caretaker of a dependent child. To receive the one-time payment, the grandparent must be at least 45 years old and fall below thresholds for family income and other

monetary resources.

Sec. 31.0324(b) allows a grandparent to serve as a protective payee for a dependent child. A protective payee receives and uses the monetary assistance on behalf of the child and can apply for other financial assistance.

DIGEST:

HB 132 would add an aunt, uncle, sister, or brother to the list of people who would qualify for a \$1,000 one-time payment under the TANF program for the primary caretakers of a dependent child and would lower the minimum age to qualify from 45 years old to 25 years old. An aunt, uncle, sister, or brother who was at least 25 years old also could serve as the child's protective payee.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 132 would make more relatives who care for dependent children eligible to receive the financial support they need to provide for them. Grandparents are the largest group of kin caregivers, but aunts and uncles make up the second-largest group, followed by siblings. Reducing the age requirement from 45 to 25 and opening up the one-time TANF payment and protective payee status to aunts, uncles, or siblings of a dependent child could expand the number of kin available to care for a child in need.

In many situations, these relatives would like to care for a child but cannot afford it. The bill would help them pay for a child's basic needs, including food, clothing, furniture, transportation, and other essentials. Improving the financial capacity of relatives to serve as caregivers would allow children to remain in a more stable environment with family members. This has been shown to lead to better outcomes for children than placement in foster care.

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have no significant fiscal implication to the state, and any cost to implement its provisions could be absorbed within existing resources.

OPPONENTS No apparent opposition.
SAY:

NOTES: A companion bill, SB 212 by Menéndez, was referred to the Senate
Committee on Health and Human Services on January 25.