



**RYAN GUILLEN**  
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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
COREY.TICKNOR@HOUSE.TEXAS.GOV

**GUILLEN SUPPORTS FAMILY CAREGIVERS**

*HB 4 Allows Caregivers to Properly Support Themselves and Their Children*

**AUSTIN** - State Representative Ryan Guillen (D-Rural South Texas) is an author of HB 4, a bill that allows certain kinship caregivers to receive cash payments from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) based on their income. The bill also makes it a criminal offense to intentionally deceive DFPS into allowing them to enter into a caregiver assistance agreement. HB 4 passed the Texas Senate on **Monday, May 22**.

**"A stable environment is essential to the welfare of our children," said Guillen. "Children in kinship care have a much better chance of exiting DFPS custody, and I fully agree with providing resources to relatives taking on the task of raising a child in need."**

Under HB 4, DFPS will provide monetary assistance and other support services to a kinship caregiver based on their family's need. The federal poverty level (FPL) will be used as a guideline to determine family income needs. HB 4 will qualify a caregiver for the annual reimbursement if the caregiver's income is 300 percent or less of the federal poverty level and if the child is in the caregiver's care at the time an expense is incurred.

The financial assistance must include a one-time payment of up to \$1,000 for the initial placement of a child. The payment for placement of a sibling group must be at least \$1,000 for the group, but may not be more than \$1,000 for each child in the group. Caregivers may also be reimbursed for certain other expenses of no more than \$500 per year for each child. HB 4 will establish a criminal offence and civil penalty for those who create fraudulent statements in order to become a caregiver.

The cost of a child's average stay in kinship care is considerably less than a child's average stay in nonrelative foster care. Additionally, allowing children to remain under the loving care of their relatives has proven to be better in terms of more stability, fewer placement changes, and fewer behavioral issues than children placed in non-relative care. **"By empowering kinship caregivers with the financial resources necessary to look after a child we can save the state money and provide a better service to Texas' most vulnerable children," Guillen said.**

**"Foster kids don't get to choose where and by whom they're raised, the state makes that difficult decision," said Guillen. "We owe it these powerless children to provide them with the best possible scenario for them to grow into responsible citizens and succeed in their hopes and dreams."**

Representative Ryan Guillen serves ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, including Atascosa, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Starr, and Willacy.

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