

SENATE BILL 1602

By Briggs

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37,  
relative to relative caregivers.

WHEREAS, relative caregivers perform a critical function in the lives of children at risk of entering the foster care system by providing housing, care, and emotional support in a familial setting; and

WHEREAS, relative caregivers are often left to pay out-of-pocket for the added costs associated with the daily living costs of such children; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly believes the opioid crisis in this State may have resulted in an increase in the number of children who need relative caregivers, and thus increased the financial burden on relative caregivers across this State; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to study this topic in an effort to identify ways the State and local governments can better support relative caregivers in this State; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. The Tennessee advisory commission on intergovernmental relations shall conduct a study on relative caregivers in Tennessee and report to the general assembly no later than January 1, 2021. The study must include an analysis of the financial burden of the opioid crisis on relative caregivers; the success rates of relative caregivers preventing children from entering foster care; any correlation between the financial resources of relative caregivers and the success rates of preventing children from entering state custody; possible factors at the local, state, and federal levels impacting the financial burden on relative caregivers; and any other information or analysis the commission may deem relevant to the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to determine the factors impacting the financial burden on relative caregivers in this state, whether legislative action is necessary or appropriate to address those

causes, and ways in which the state and local governments can work together to reduce the burden. If a need for legislation is found, then the report must also include recommendations on possible legislative remedies.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.