

## Support for White House Recognition of National Kinship Care Month

Since 2014, states and Congress have celebrated National Kinship Care Month with proclamations, resolutions, and celebrations. States include Nevada, Connecticut, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Illinois, California, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, South Dakota, and Texas, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, New Jersey, New York, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, and. Kansas. Congressional resolutions include U. S. Senate resolutions in 2017 (Res. 264), 2019 (Res. 323), 2020 (Res. 736) , and House resolution in 2019 (Res.542). In Congress, resolutions have been sponsored by Senator Wyden and Congresswoman Bass.

Kinship Care Month celebrates the 2.8 million children and their caregivers. Kinship caregivers are mostly grandparents, but also aunts, uncles, other relatives, and family friends who assume parenting duties when parents are unable or unwilling to parent. Kinship care is part of the nation's child welfare response, with approximately 140,000 children in kinship foster care and many others placed in the care of relatives who are not foster parents. Kinship Care is mainly caused by unfortunate circumstances, including parental neglect, abuse, incarceration, incapacity, death, abandonment. Kinship children are often traumatized and have experienced adverse childhood experiences.

State legislative/gubernatorial and congressional resolutions/proclamations described kinship caregivers, their importance as a child welfare resource, and express appreciation for this support of vulnerable children. They also enunciate examples of kinship caregivers and kinship children who have been political, judicial, military leaders, sports and entertainment figures. Recent examples are President Barrack Obama and Justices Sandra O'Connor and Clarence Thomas. Samples of state and congressional resolutions are attached.

Congress has supported the provision of services to kinship families. For the fourth year, the Consolidated Appropriations Act continues \$20 million for kinship navigators, in the 2021 response to the Covid-19 crisis waives certain requirements for use of Title IV-E funds for kinship navigator services, and in the American Rescue Plan Act provides funding for a Technical Assistance Center on Grandfamilies and Kinship Families.

Kinship Care is as American as apple pie. Especially important to the Black community, where historically because of slavery, incarceration, and other disadvantages, many children have lived with extended family members. Kinship Care Month is celebrated in September so that it

is linked to Grandparents' Day, which was originally proclaimed by President Carter, and ties celebration of Kinship Care Month to the major role of grandparents as kinship caregivers.

The Child Welfare of America has been a leader in supporting recognition of National Kinship Care Month, and has worked with other advocates, especially the National Kinship Alliance and the NYS Kinship Navigator whose recently retired director Gerard Wallace is a senior fellow at CWLA and an originator of the kinship care month movement.

The Child Welfare League of America urges President Biden and Vice-President Harris to support the invaluable role that kinship caregiving has played in American history and in the country's current crisis of care for children and to proclaim September as Kinship Care Month.

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