

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

INTERIM
BILL

Senate Bill 544

By Senators Deeds, Grady, M. Maynard, Roberts, and

Tarr

[Introduced January 20, 2026; referred
to the Committee on Health and Human Resources;
and then to the Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section,
 2 designated §49-2-815, relating to the temporary payment to a kinship parent of a subsidy
 3 equal to that of a foster parent.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN.

§49-2-815. Temporary increase in kinship payment subsidy.

1 (a) Temporary increase in subsidy amount — Notwithstanding any other provision to the
 2 contrary, a kinship parent shall be eligible for a temporary increase in the subsidy amounts equal
 3 to that of the foster parent subsidy if at the time of initial placement, the following circumstances:

4 (1) The kinship parent shall pass a background check, through the WV Cares Program,
 5 which shall be submitted within five days of the initial date of placement;

6 (2) The kinship placement shall pass an initial home screening to identify and to correct
 7 fatal life safety issues; and

8 (3) The kinship parent shall be assigned to a child placing agency to assist them with
 9 obtaining certification as a foster parent and compliance with all other aspects of certification.

10 (b) Time frame for temporary increase — The temporary increase in subsidy amounts shall
 11 become payable to the kinship parent within 30 days of the initial kinship placement and will
 12 continue for a period of no more than six months at the temporary rate to allow the kinship parent
 13 to become certified. If the kinship parent is unable or unwilling to become certified at the end of the
 14 six-month period, the temporary increase will be removed and is no longer payable.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require that a kinship parent be paid a subsidy equal to that of a foster parent in specified circumstances and set forth the timeframe for such payment.

The bill was recommended for introduction by the Joint Committee on Children and Families.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.