

House Bill 971

By: Representatives Benton of the 31st, Abrams of the 89th, Sharper of the 177th, and Bennett of the 94th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 1 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 general provisions applicable to social services, so as to authorize the Department of Human
3 Services to provide the same medical assistance and health insurance coverages to kinship
4 caregivers and the children in their care that are provided to foster parents and the children
5 in their care; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Chapter 1 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general
9 provisions applicable to social services, is amended by adding a new Code section to read
10 as follows:

11 "49-1-8.

12 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

13 (1) 'Basic necessities' means water, electricity, gas, power, light, heat, telephone, or other
14 public utility services.

15 (2) 'Child' means any person under 18 years of age.

16 (3) 'Foster parent or parents' shall have the same meaning as provided in Code
17 Section 49-5-60.

18 (4) 'Kinship caregiver' means a grandparent, aunt, uncle, great aunt, great uncle, cousins,
19 sibling, or close family friend of a child who has assumed responsibility for raising such
20 child in an informal, noncustodial, or guardianship capacity upon the parents of such
21 child losing or abdicating the ability to care for or provide basic necessities for such child.

22 (5) 'Parents' means the legal father and the legal mother of a child.

23 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the department shall have the authority
24 to provide, and shall take all necessary steps to so provide, all medical assistance and health
25 insurance coverages to kinship caregivers and the children in their care as are provided to
26 a foster parent or parents for the benefit of such parent or parents or the children in their

27 care. Such medical assistance and health insurance coverages shall be provided at the same
28 rate, for the same periods of time, and under the same conditions for kinship caregivers and
29 the children in their care as they are to any foster parent or parents or the children in their
30 care."

31 **SECTION 2.**

32 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.