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Children's Defense Fund

## Children's Defense Fund Celebrates THIRD NATIONAL GrandRALLY

*600,000 Texas Children Are Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives*

Houston, TX—On Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, Children's Defense Fund and over 150 grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren gathered to celebrate the Third National GrandRally at the Sunnyside Multi-Service Center in Houston. Rally participants engaged in a letter writing campaign to urge Congress and the Senate to support the Kinship Caregiver Support Act (S. 661 / H.R. 2188). Thank you letters were sent to U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, and U.S. Representatives Sheila Jackson Lee, Gene Green and Al Green for their support of the legislation.

### TEXAS FACTS

- More than 448,000 Texas children live in grandparent-headed households (7.6% of all Texas children). Another 153,381 live in households headed by other relatives (2.6% of all Texas children).
- More than 244,000 Texas children live in households headed by grandparents or other relatives without the presence of either parent.
- More than 257,000 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [25,347 in Houston, 15,075 in San Antonio, and 15,019 in Dallas]
  - 21% of these grandparents are African American; 42% are Hispanic/Latino; 1% are Asian; and 35% are White.
  - 32% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 74% are under the age of 60; 21% live in poverty.

### U.S. FACTS

- Nearly 6 million children – or one in 12 – live with grandparents or other relatives, and
- More than 2.5 million of these children live without either parent present. (2000 U.S. Census)
- Over the last decade, child welfare agencies have become increasingly reliant on relatives as the first option when a foster care placement is needed for a child who has been abused or neglected.

### What is the GrandRally?

The GrandRally offers caregivers, advocates and Members of Congress the chance to recognize and celebrate the essential role that grandparents and other relative caregivers play in keeping children safe and in stable families. Grandparents and other relative caregivers across the country unite in common voice and concern to raise awareness about the needs of children and to urge lawmakers to support ***The Kinship Caregiver Support Act***.

**The Kinship Caregiver Support Act (S. 661/H.R. 2188)** offers help to children raised by relatives by establishing a *Kinship Navigator Program*, which would fund grants to help link relative caregivers, both inside and outside of the formal child welfare system to a broad range of services and supports needed for their children and themselves.

The bill also establishes a *Kinship Guardian Assistance Program*, which would help to ensure permanent homes for some children living with relatives. It provides states the option to use federal funds for subsidized guardianship payments to relieve caregivers on behalf of children they cared for in foster homes and who are committed to caring for them permanently outside of the formal child welfare system.

GrandRally 2008 is sponsored by AARP, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund (CDF), Generations United (GU), GrandFamilies of America, and National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights (NCGCR).

For more information about CDF's GrandRally, visit [www.GrandRally.org](http://www.GrandRally.org). People can learn about the Federal Kinship Caregiver Support Act, Kinship Care in Texas, and download helpful resources for contacting their Representatives.

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The Children's Defense Fund's *Leave No Child Behind*<sup>®</sup> mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.