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**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS
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Supporting Relative Caregivers

On January 1, 2017, Los Angeles County foster care changed drastically as a result of California’s Continuum of Care Reform. As part of these changes, prospective caregivers must complete a new approval process called Resource Family Approval (“RFA”) in order to care for children in foster care. All caregivers, including relative and non-relative extended family member (“NREFM”) caregivers, must complete hours of training, undergo multiple interviews, and fulfill many other requirements to be approved as a resource family and receive foster care funding.

Despite the RFA approval process, children are often placed with relatives and NREFMs on an emergency basis, consistent with the legal mandate that children be placed with an appropriate relative as quickly as possible. Once children are placed on an emergency basis, the relatives and NREFMs begin to work through the RFA approval process, which can take months to complete. This delay often creates increased stress on relative and NREFM caregivers as they support the child(ren) without sufficient funds.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) recognizes the importance of providing immediate funding to caregivers when a child is placed on an emergency basis. DCFS is one of the only child welfare agencies in California that

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devotes a portion of its Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention Support (FPPRS) funding to provide a temporary stipend to these relative and NREFM caregivers while they are being approved. This \$400 stipend is available per child for up to three months following an emergency placement. The three month stipend was intended to correlate with the 90 day time period that state regulations provide for completion of the approval process following an emergency placement. However, very few counties in California are completing the approval process in 90 days. Instead, it is taking much longer than three months for a family to be approved and receive full foster care funding. Efforts are underway at the local and state levels to improve the timeliness for approval, but in the interim, relatives and their kin are struggling.

This harsh reality is coupled with our need to recruit and retain more foster parents to care for children in Los Angeles County who have experienced abuse, neglect, and abandonment. The County continues to face an unprecedented shortage of homes for our most vulnerable children. This problem could be exacerbated without further funding to bridge the gap created by California's new approval system. Relatives are the backbone of our foster care system. Providing relative and NREFM caregivers with extended, temporary funding will help stabilize families while they complete the approval process and care for their kin.

WE THEREFORE MOVE, that the Department of Children and Family Services, in collaboration with the Department of Public Social Services, report back to the Board in 60 days on the following:

1. The feasibility of extending gap funding to relative caregivers and NREFMs until RFA approval; and

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2. An assessment of the barriers preventing resource families from being evaluated and approved through the Resource Family Approval process within the 90 day timeline prescribed by State regulations, as well as recommendations on how to overcome these barriers through state or local policy changes.