

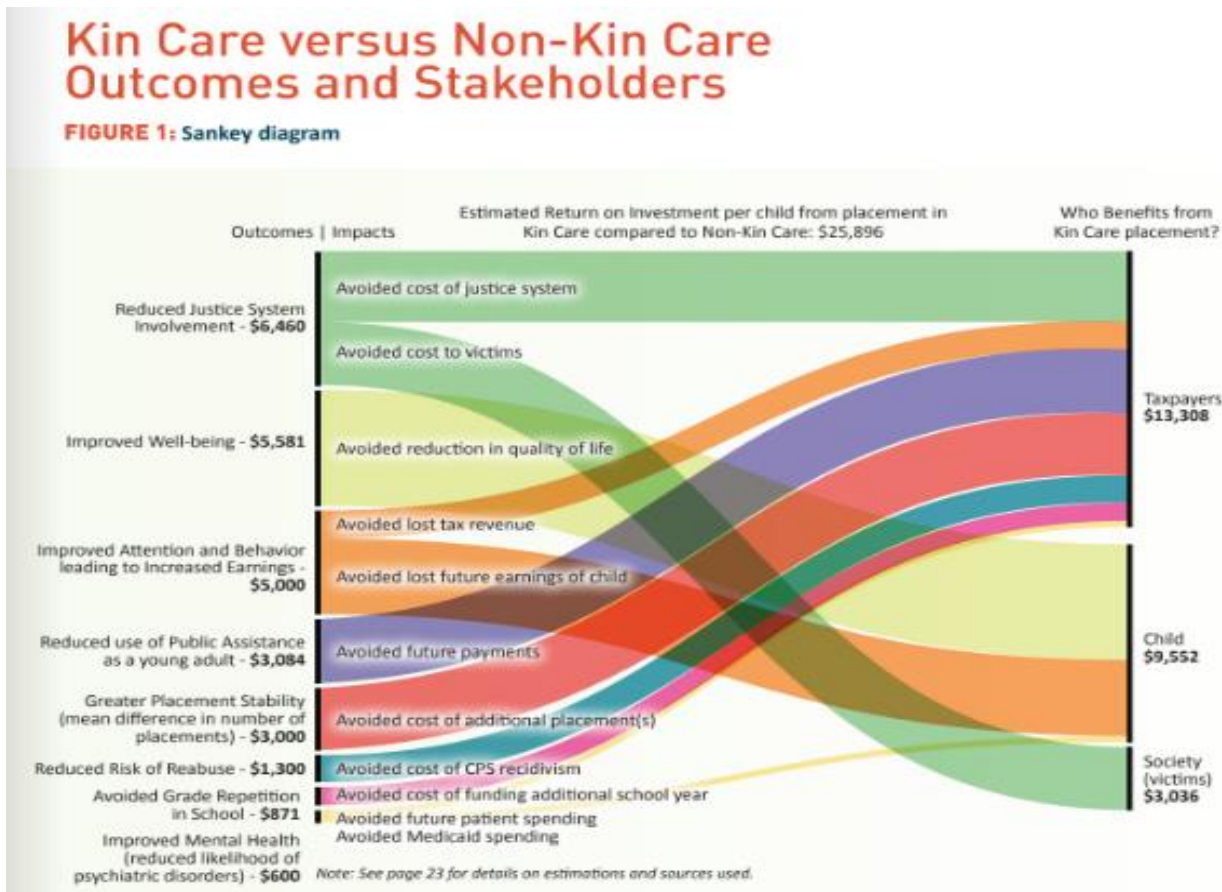


4/10/24

Dear Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC) in strong support of Senate Bill 24-008: Increasing Support for Kinship Foster Care Homes. The ORPC provides high-quality interdisciplinary legal representation for parents in crisis who have been separated from their children in dependency and neglect cases.

Comprehensive research demonstrates that when children remain home or are placed with kin, the long-term costs to the youth and to society are substantially lessened when compared to children placed in out-of-home care with foster parents or in residential settings. Placing children with relatives and kin results in better long-term outcomes for children, and investing in kin placements saves money in the long term compared to placement of children in foster care, as shown by this chart from a recent study by [Alia](#):



Last session, two bills with widespread support started the framework to prioritize placement with relatives and kin while also making the placement process easier to navigate: HB 23-1024 and HB 23-1043. However, neither bill provided the crucial financial support that kin need to be able to provide for their family members and loved ones. This bill would close that gap and ensure that relatives and kin have what they need to support children in their



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care. While there is a fiscal cost for this support, funding relative and kinship placements will ultimately reduce long-term costs to Colorado by providing better outcomes for children and families.

We urge you to pass and prioritize the necessary funding to keep children with family whenever safely possible. We look forward to our conversations with each of you on these issues and the other complex challenges facing our state as we work towards a system that better supports families.

Best regards,

Melanie Jordan

Policy Director, Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel