

HB 2738 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Human Services

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/8, 4/5, 4/7, 4/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$5,670,000 and \$250,000 to the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Fund, in addition to any other appropriations, for the CASA Volunteer Program and for training, respectively. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- CASA Volunteer Program's impact on children in foster care
- Increased capacity of CASA Volunteer program
- Preparation for a post-COVID-19 surge in children entering the foster system

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure.

Replaces Department of Administrative Services (DAS) discretion to contract, with *requirement* to contract, with a nongovernmental statewide coordinating entity to oversee Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteer Program and services. Makes other modifications consistent with this end and requires contracted entity to ensure CASA compliance with National CASA Association standards and with Oregon's Juvenile Code. Prohibits distribution of funds to CASA Volunteer Programs until the program has submitted to the statewide coordinating entity the program's annual diversity, equity, inclusion and accountability plan. Appropriates \$5,670,000 to the CASA Volunteer Program and \$250,000 to the Oregon CASA Network for a statewide distance training and learning program. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are specially trained volunteers appointed by courts to advocate for the best interests of children. The Oregon CASA Network, an affiliate of the National CASA Association, is the statewide organization supporting Oregon's 22 local CASA programs. The local programs recruit, screen, train and support CASA volunteers.

House Bill 2738 appropriates General Fund dollars to support the CASA Volunteer Program and the statewide training of CASA volunteers.