



YAMHILL COUNTY CASA PROGRAM

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April 11, 2012

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the committee,

My name is Mary Holdman. I am a CASA with the Yamhill County CASA program. I live in McMinnville. I'm submitting written testimony today to ask that you continue to fund court appointed special advocate programs throughout Oregon and approve the Oregon CASA Network's request for \$6.4 million which will greatly benefit all Oregon CASA programs over the next two years.

I have been a certified CASA since 2019. My advocacy has included several cases including babies born affected by drugs, an unfortunately too common occurrence right now. As a CASA, I am uniquely positioned to provide information to the courts that will promote the best and safest long-term living situations for the children in my cases, with the hope that they will be able to overcome the obstacles that put them into care and grow into healthy, stable members of our community. CASAs usually spend more time working with the children than ODHS caseworkers or lawyers assigned to represent the children. We are aware of how the children feel, even those who are too young to advocate for themselves. We interact with all the people who are part of the children's lives: parents, family, resource parents, school staff for older children, and ODHS workers. For these reasons I believe that CASAs are an important part of the whole picture for children in custodial care.

Although CASAs are not paid for the work we do, we cannot complete our advocacy without the support and backing of the Oregon CASA Network and our local CASA staff. These resources require financial support to keep the whole CASA program functioning in Oregon. In the end, it's all about the children of Oregon being able to live in safety and stability.

Thank you for supporting Oregon CASA.

Sincerely,

Mary Holdman
CASA Volunteer
Yamhill County CASA Program