



## YAMHILL COUNTY CASA PROGRAM

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Good evening, Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the committee. Thank you for taking time to meet with myself and my fellow Oregonians tonight.

My name is Sarah Johnson. I am the Executive Director for the Yamhill County CASA program as well as an active CASA volunteer. I live in Amity. I'm here tonight 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 over the next two years.

As you may know, April is National Child Abuse Prevention month. During the month of April, we recognize the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. CASA programs are uniquely situated to help families and children connect with the right services to heal trauma and regain a sense of safety while they are involved with the court system. CASA volunteers are appointed by the judge in cases of abuse and neglect to advocate for the best interests of the child for the life of their court case.

On any given day there are about 100 children in foster care in Yamhill County. The Yamhill County CASA program was founded in 1995, and we are fortunate to have a CASA volunteer who has served all 28 of those years. Since we opened our doors, we have served over 3,000 abused and neglected children in Yamhill County and have had more than 250 CASA volunteers. Children with a CASA advocate...

- Tend to not bounce around the system
- Tend to do better in school
- Tend to get connected with more services and supports than a child without a CASA
- Tend to spend less time in foster care and are more likely to not reenter care

It costs our program about \$400 a month per advocate to train and support our CASA volunteers. It is worth noting that Oregon spends about \$120 billion on foster care every year. CASA programs can take volunteer hours and dedicate them to one-on-one advocacy, improving the lives of families and children, as well as saving Oregon money in the long run.

Thank you for your time, and on behalf of all Oregonians, thank you for everything you do for this state.

Sarah Johnson  
Executive Director, Yamhill County CASA