

COURTNEY NERON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 26



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Testimony in Support of [HB 2582](#)

January 4, 2025

Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Scharf, and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services,

I write to you today in **support of HB2582**, a technical fix to ensure CASA support for Oregon's children in foster care. **With a small language fix, we keep the intention of past legislation while proactively ensuring funding will not be delayed** by naming an organization, rather than a standard.

In 2021, some of you may remember, the late Representative Gary Leif and I worked hard to pass [House Bill 2738](#) with unanimous (59/0) bipartisan support. It was a transformative piece of legislation which accomplished several significant goals to support children in foster care in Oregon.

That year, HB 2738 finalized the transition of financial and program oversight from the Department of Administrative Services to the Oregon CASA Network. As the established statewide coordinating entity for CASA programs, OCN is now responsible for ensuring all state funds are distributed by formula – and that all local programs are complying with state laws and auditing requirements.

Our bill also enshrined in Oregon statute the Oregon CASA Network's commitment to the recruitment and training of culturally responsive volunteers to serve as court appointed special advocates.

In 2021, We raised the bar for all CASA programs in Oregon – and that same year we increased their needed state funding for the first time in decades. (From \$2.7M to \$5.9M) This brought us closer to our statutory requirement that every child in foster care with have access to their own Court Appointed Special Advocate, someone whose role is solely to look out for the best interests of the child as they navigate home life, school, parents, courts, and trauma.

Nestled within the new statutory language there are a handful of references to the National CASA Association. Unfortunately, The National CASA Association has recently faced significant federal funding issues, raising serious concerns about the organization's long-term viability.

While they may be on track to reestablish their federal funding source, these circumstances required a closer look at our Oregon references to their program and ultimately led to a reevaluation of some of the word choices in our statute.

This session, House Bill 2582 makes technical cleanup changes to ORS 184 to **remove references to the “National CASA Association” and instead clarifies that OCN and local programs must follow “nationally recognized CASA standards.”**

I believe we must pass these language changes out of an abundance of caution. Without this bill, if for some reason the National CASA Association ceases to function or exist, a strict reading of our funding laws could cause confusion or delays in the future, thereby impacting the services, supports and volunteer training that help us serve some of Oregon’s most vulnerable kids.

To be clear, **this bill will simply untether our statute from one specific organization and instead align to standards-based language instead.** It maintains the Oregon CASA Network’s ongoing responsibility to adhere to all state policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines in their role as the statewide coordinating entity for local CASA volunteer programs.

I hope you will join me in successfully moving this concept through the legislative process this year. I welcome your sponsorship and urge your support of [HB2582](#).

Sincerely,

Rep Courtney Neron

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Neron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Courtney Neron
House District 26: King City, Sherwood, Tigard, and Wilsonville