

Submitter: Kathryn Whyte

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3196

I have been a Court Appointed Special Advocate for five years. Abused and neglected children are innocent victims and deserve protection and someone to listen to them and advocate for them. Through the CASA program I have helped numerous vulnerable children and their families. I recently saw one of my kiddos graduate from college after just 3 1/2 years. During her college years, she worked on a project featuring the work of CASAs. She wants to continue her education to become either a family lawyer or a social worker. She maintains that the CASA program provided her with the support and encouragement she needed to get her to where she is today. I have seen a mother struggle with substance abuse, gain her sobriety and the custody of her sons. She is now working for a charitable organization and has been an active supporter of the CASA program. As a CASA, I've attended school meetings to advocate for the special needs of children. I've made sure that children in the care of ODHS have had their medical, dental, and psychological needs met. Through the CASA program, I've been able to provide clothing, blankets, toys, a computer, and other items to benefit abused and neglected children. When a child moves from resource home to resource home, a CASA is a consistent face for that child, a witness to the child's struggles, and a person who can speak for the child in court. Please help these vulnerable children by adopting the -1 amendment that includes CASA programs and pass the bill out of committee. Thank you for caring.