

Submitter: Katherine Tompkins
On Behalf Of: CASA of Jackson and Josephine Counties
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3196

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3196 -1 amendment that would provide critical funding for programs that support children in the foster care system. I have been a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for almost 20 years, and have served over three dozen children. CASA volunteers play a vital role in advocating for the best interests of abused, abandoned, and neglected children within the foster care system. The reason I continue to volunteer my time for CASA and do this work is because I believe vulnerable children need a voice. CASA volunteers provide a consistent, caring presence for these children, and help to see that they receive the services they need. It takes effort to keep these children from “falling through the cracks”. Research has show that children with a CASA advocate are more likely to find safe, permanent homes and have better long-term outcomes. The CASA programs provide value to our communities as do other community agencies who rely on VOCA funding to support children and families.

Limited funding means that many children will not get the services they need and deserve. I strongly recommend that you adopt the -1 amendment that includes CASA and other community programs to support children in care and pass the bill out of committee. I urge you to prioritize funding and help protect and support vulnerable children experiencing the foster care system so that they can grow up to be healthy and contributing members in our communities.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the welfare of children. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your support on this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Katherine Tompkins