

Submitter: Mary Holdman  
On Behalf Of: Yamill County CASA  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3196

I have been a CASA since June 2019 and am convinced that this program is of huge benefit to children in foster care. I became a CASA because of stories about vulnerable children lost in the system, needing someone to watch out for them and keep them safe. We are an independent voice for the children reporting directly to the courts, and we are often a vital voice for the child as well. Yamhill County CASA supported 117 children in 2024. We work closely with ODHS while also keeping track of how cases are proceeding to make sure children don't languish or are not in unsafe situations. It is important that funding for Victims of Crime Acts be continued to enable CASA statewide to help these vulnerable children. My last three cases have involved babies born drug affected to mothers caught in the fentanyl crisis. These children frequently need extra services to help them recover from the drug exposure, even if they are in otherwise safe care with non-drug using family members or resource parents. CASAs often help identify resources necessary for young children to thrive and also check to be sure that parents are using the resources they need, such as parent coaching, recovery counseling and services. We depend on the same funding that supports other organizations such as the Oregon Child Advocacy Centers and the Oregon Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence. For these reasons, I urge you to please adopt the amendment to appropriate moneys to backfill reductions in federal Victims of Crime grants. Mary Holdman, McMinnville