

Submitter: Althea Beam

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3196

I am in support of HB 3196 as it helps to fund CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) programs throughout the state. CASA provides a critical service for our children and youth. As a CASA volunteer I visit the children assigned to me in their home and in the community. I observe their behavior at school, during visits at their home, and during visits with their parents. I attend school meetings to ensure that they receive the educational (including special education) services needed to ensure that they have the best chance to access education. I attend meetings with parents, resource parents, educators, school officials, social workers, lawyers, and mental health providers. All of this enables me to submit a report to the judge who will determine whether the children return to their parents' care or are granted adoption or guardianship. The judge relies on CASA volunteers to provide them with this vital information. CASA volunteers are advocates for the children we serve. It is a lot of work that is worth it to know that these children who have been abused and/or neglected will get a chance to survive, to heal, and to grow. The local CASA offices provide both initial and continuing training to volunteers, in addition to coordination with ODHS, the local court, and the service providers, both public and private, who assist our children. On behalf of our neediest children, I fully support HB 3196 to ensure funds continue to help keep Oregon's children safe and healthy.