



Subject: Support for SB 875 - Oregon CASA Network

Date: February 26, 2025

To: Chair Gelser-Blouin, Vice Chair Linthicum, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee

From: Kat Hendrix, Oregon CASA Network

Dear Chair Gelser-Blouin, Vice Chair Linthicum, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

Oregon CASA Network (OCN) is pleased to offer our testimony in support of Senate Bill 875, which aims to expand and reinforce the rights of children in foster care and their siblings. As a statewide nonprofit organization, OCN works tirelessly to provide training, technical support, and legal assistance to nineteen local CASA programs spanning all 36 counties in Oregon. Through our efforts, thousands of dedicated CASA volunteers advocate for the wellbeing of children and youth in foster care, both in the courtroom and their daily lives.

We firmly stand behind SB 875 due to its critical enhancements in safety provisions for the most vulnerable demographic - children and youth who have faced abuse and neglect. This bill ensures they are granted essential rights to education and advocacy that champion their best interests and empower them through the gift of choice. Granting choice restores and cultivates a sense of self-determination and autonomy.

SB 875 is a crucial step in safeguarding the dignity of children and youth in foster care by granting them access to belongings of personal significance, providing comfort and connection during transitions. Additionally, the bill preserves their inherent dignity by codifying the appropriate transport of personal belongings.

SB 875 recognizes the significance of meaningful connections by ensuring foster youth maintain vital relationships with siblings - relationships that require nurturing and support. By prioritizing sibling bonds, this bill upholds the emotional well-being of children in foster care, offering them much-needed stability.

Oregon CASA Network supports SB 875 as a crucial legislative measure to safeguard the rights, safety, dignity, and connections of children and youth in foster care. We encourage the Senate Human Services Committee to consider the profound impact this bill will have on the lives of those who need it most.

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