

**To:** Senator Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Linthicum and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services  
**From:** Shelly Smith, Executive Director, Oregon Child Abuse Solutions  
(OCAS)  
[shelly@oregoncas.org](mailto:shelly@oregoncas.org)

Date: March 4, 2025

RE: SB 135- Support **with** Amendments

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Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (OCAS) writes to provide support of SB 135, with the addition of two friendly amendments. We respectfully request that Section 4 be changed to ensure CASA Program Staff, not CASA volunteers, represent children at Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Team meetings and that Section 5 of the bill be deleted. **Oregon Child Abuse Solutions would support SB 135 if Section 4 is updated and Section 5 is deleted.**

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions is the statewide network of Children's Advocacy Centers. There are 24 children's advocacy centers in Oregon serving all 36 counties. The mission of OCAS is to elevate Oregon's child abuse prevention and response by strengthening children's advocacy centers, training first responders, and building public support to ensure children – in all Oregon communities – receive quality, timely, and healing-centered care.

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions strongly supports Court Appointed Special Advocates, believing that they play an integral part in advocating for children and families as they navigate the child welfare system, and we think that CASAs should be integrated into many of the systems and structures in place that address child abuse and support children and their families.

**Oregon Child Abuse Solutions respectfully requests that Section 4 text be amended to:**

~~“current or former court appointed special advocates~~ **program staff from the local CASA program.”**

Additionally, we request Section 5, subsection 4 be deleted. This section adds a definition of Court Appointed Special Advocates to the section of statute that also defines Child Abuse Assessment and other terms that are very specific to the work at Children's Advocacy Centers. While CASAs play a vital role in supporting and advocating for children in state custody, their duties do not include attending child abuse medical evaluations or forensic interviews at children's advocacy centers. Therefore, including CASAs in this state statute is not appropriate.

**Specifically, we request that this language be struck from Section 5:**

~~“(4) “Court appointed special advocate” means a person in a CASA Volunteer Program who is appointed by a court to act as a court appointed special advocate pursuant to ORS 419B.112”~~

Thank you for your consideration of this amendment request. **Oregon Child Abuse Solutions would support SB 135 if Section 4 is updated and Section 5 is deleted.**