

March 6, 2025

TO: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcomm. on General Government
FROM: Ali King on behalf of Our Children Oregon's 2025 Children's Agenda
SUBJECT: Support for HB 5002

Chair Gorsek, Chair Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ali King and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for Our Children Oregon (OCO), a statewide organization that advances equitable policies, data and research, and whole-child advocacy. The Children's Agenda, convened annually by OCO, brings together more than 135 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the wellbeing of Oregon's children, youth, and families. **I am writing today in support of the CASA programs, which are included in the 2025 Children's Agenda and have strong and broad support from our partner organizations across Oregon.**

As a coalition of child and family advocates, educators, administrators, parents, and policy experts, we have seen firsthand how important Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are for children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse and/or neglect and are in the care of the State.

In 2021, there were 5,516 kids in foster care in Oregon.¹ Oregon state law mandates that every foster child be appointed a CASA, but, due to limited resources, over a third of foster children do not have a CASA. With the increase to the budget of \$7 million, more progress can be made toward providing a CASA to help foster kids navigate a very stressful and challenging

¹ <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/publications/oregon-kids-count/>

process with a trusted adult by their side, advocating for them and connecting them with the services they need to be healthy, safe, and educated.

We want to thank you for the work you do every day for Oregon's children and families and **we respectfully request that Court Appointed Special Advocate programs be funded at \$7 million within HB 5002.**

Sincerely,

Our Children Oregon
Oregon CASA Network
Beyond Toxics
Children's Institute
Latino Network
Next Up Action Fund
Nurse-Family Partnership
Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries
Oregon Association of Student Councils
Oregon Child Abuse Solutions
Oregon Primary Care Association
Oregon PTA
Oregon School Nurses' Association
Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon
Southern Oregon Success
Urban League of Portland
Vision To Learn
Washington County Kids

View the [2025 Children's Agenda](#)