

Submitter: David Watson  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Please help Oregon's children in foster care by supporting HB 5002 and HB 3196. These bills are critical funding sources to enable CASA volunteers to work within the courts in collaboration with key agencies, legal counsel, and community resources to ensure that every child in foster care in Central Oregon can transition into a safe and permanent home.

Children who have experienced abuse and neglect from their primary caregivers are perhaps one of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations there is. Most children are placed in foster care for a combination of factors, including abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic violence, parental substance abuse, and parental mental illness.

In Central Oregon, the CASA is often the only consistent adult presence in a child's life during their time in foster care. A child will experience several different caseworkers and will likely live in several resource homes during their time in care but will have just one CASA. This advocacy is effective; national studies show children paired with a CASA tend to receive more needed services, do better in school and in key mental health markers, are less likely to re-enter the foster care system after their case closes, and report higher levels of hope and optimism than children without a CASA volunteer.

There are two bills that are being considered this year by the legislature that will have a tremendous impact for children in foster care. I ask for your support for both HB 5002 and HB 3196 to care for and help move kids out of the foster care system, in the best short and long term interest of our society. Thank you!