

Submitter: Mary Holdman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Public Safety

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5014

Dear Co-Chairs Evans and Broadman, and members of the Ways and Means Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety:

I am a CASA volunteer in Yamhill County. I work as a volunteer appointed by the court to advocate for children in foster care. I have been a volunteer for CASA since 2019, and I believe strongly that our work improves outcomes for children in the foster care system. We are the only ones who report directly to the court on behalf of the children, with the goal of ensuring that these vulnerable children are in the place that will provide the most safety and security for them. These children range in age from new-borns, frequently born drug affected, to teenagers on the cusp of emancipation. They have suffered traumas of many kinds, from neglect to the effects of drug exposure before birth, to sexual and physical abuse, and emotional abuse. As CASAs, we are there to interact with the children, help them navigate the systems, and communicate with the court as to what is in their best interest. 41

As volunteers, we rely on funding from different sources. For this reason, I urgently ask that you support HB 3196-\$18.5M Backfill Federal Cuts to Victims of Crime (VOCA) and DOJ POP #327: Stabilizing State Dollars. It is crucial to have secure, on-going funding for all of the agencies that support children in vulnerable situations. Yamhill County CASA has a small paid staff that supports the work of the dozens of volunteers who are advocates for children in Yamhill County. The financial support will ensure that our agency can continue to operate in Yamhill County.

Thank you. Mary Holdman, Yamhill County CASA