

Submitter: Sarah Johnson

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5014

Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and for everything each of you do for communities throughout Oregon. I strongly urge you to fully fund HB 5014. This bill supports critical services for vulnerable children and families throughout Oregon, and we need that support now more than ever. With the fear and stress many Oregonians are feeling right now, the number of people who act out violently is increasing. We will continue to see more violence between neighbors, within families, and towards children. This bill provides necessary funding for essential services to support victims and prevent violence. Many of our strongest allies and community partners rely on this funding. We partner closely with Henderson House in McMinnville to help survivors of violence find their way out of their living nightmares. We work with Juliette's House, local law enforcement, Oregon Department of Human Services, and the DA's office through the Yamhill County Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Taskforce to identify trends, support local families in crisis, and problem solve unusual cases through open interagency collaboration. We are working together to keep kids safe and families whole.

I also want to ask the subcommittee members today to support HB 3196, which aims to backfill lost federal Victims of Crime Act funds. The funding in HB 3196 (2025) provides \$18.5M in one-time funding to backfill these cuts for VOCA grantees, as well as \$3M for Court Appointed Special Advocate programs. These federal funds used to account for 18-20% of my program's funding annually, funding we lost in 2021, and have been limping along year to year (paycheck to paycheck) for four years.

It costs about \$2000 per year for a child to have a CASA assigned to their case in Yamhill County. Children with a CASA tend to do better in school, spend less time in foster care, and don't bounce around the system as much as children without. Children with a CASA have a stable adult in their corner during their families' darkest days, and a positive role model during the child's formative years, all leading to better family outcomes and better launch points for children as they enter adulthood. This funding would make it possible for Yamhill County CASA to have an advocate appointed to 100% of children in care in 2025/26.

Again, thank you for your time,

Sarah Johnson

Executive Director, Yamhill County CASA

