

HB 2568 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Carrier:** Sen. Linthicum**Senate Committee On Judiciary****Action Date:** 04/24/19**Action:** Do pass the A-Eng bill.**Vote:** 6-0-1-0**Yeas:** 6 - Bentz, Fagan, Linthicum, Manning Jr, Prozanski, Thatcher**Exc:** 1 - Gelser**Fiscal:** Has minimal fiscal impact**Revenue:** No revenue impact**Prepared By:** Addie Smith, Counsel**Meeting Dates:** 4/24**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Directs the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to review the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteer programs, 2018 CASA Program Evaluation Report, and the differences in operations between CASA volunteer programs in different counties based on the differences in Department of Human Services and court practices by July 1, 2020. Requires DAS to report to the Legislative Assembly on its findings and on any recommendations for operational best practices and standardization by September 15, 2020.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Location of CASA Program oversight in DAS
- 2018 Public Knowledge CASA Program Evaluation
- CASA and DAS collaboration on measure implementation

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are court-appointed volunteers who advocate on behalf of children in juvenile court dependency cases. They investigate, examine, and advocate for the best interest of a child in order to help the court make decisions that promote safety, permanency, and well-being for that child. In Oregon, there are 23 local CASA programs serving approximately 40 percent of eligible children.

In 2018, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) commissioned an independent third-party, Public Knowledge, to evaluate Oregon CASA Programs. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide analysis and recommendations to help DAS and the Oregon State Legislative Assembly make decisions about the future of Oregon CASA Programs. The evaluation looked at the strengths and opportunities of Oregon CASA Programs' service delivery model, the optimal governance structure and placement of the program within state government, and the ideal funding distribution structure. Ultimately, it found that:

"The State of Oregon and Oregon CASA stakeholders should fully implement, fund, and maintain a statewide affiliated nonprofit. It should have CASA expertise to support the Oregon CASA Programs. The State should play a limited funding and oversight role. Under this governance structure, one statewide nonprofit organization would provide program support and technical assistance to the 23 independent nonprofit CASA programs. Key characteristics of this model include:

- Local CASA programs remain independent 501(c)(3) organizations within a statewide network, accountable to local boards.
- Local CASA programs continue to be accountable to National CASA Association (NCASAA) standards.
- The State acts solely as a funding agent and does not provide any program support or oversight to the

HB 2568 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

individual programs.

- State funding is passed through a state agency to the statewide nonprofit organization, which then acts as an administrative funder to distribute to the local CASA programs.
- The affiliated nonprofit has oversight of local CASA programs' expenditure of state funds, and is then accountable to the state agency.
- Thirty-seven states structure CASA programs in this manner, with variances in implementation.

House Bill 2568 A requires DAS to study CASA Volunteer Programs and review the 2018 Public Knowledge CASA Program Evaluation Report, then make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly to address operational concerns and inconsistencies by September 15, 2020.