

Dear Rep Smith:

I am writing to say **THANK YOU** for being one of our Co-Sponsors for **House Bill 4141** during the **2020 Session, which will accomplish two important goals:**

- 1) Ensure CASA program support & quality assurance by hiring a staff person to provide significantly greater support of and quality assurance within the **22 local CASA programs across Oregon. (Cost: \$141,740)**
- 2) Expand local recruitment/training to **increase the number and diversity of CASAs** by making a state investment in local CASA programs to fund additional advertising and other recruitment activities as well as expand **training for a larger and more diverse group of CASAs that will serve at least 1,000 additional Oregon children in foster care** this biennium. Funds will be distributed to all 22 local CASA programs using the new DAS formula that provides a proportional investment based on the number of foster children in each county. **(Cost: \$2,475,000)**

The total cost of HB 4141 is \$2,616,740. This funding will take a large step toward providing a CASA for every Oregon child in foster care by **adding CASAs for at least 1,000 additional children during this biennium.**

As you know, a Court Appointed Special Advocate is the only person on a case whose sole responsibility is the child's best interest. **Nearly 55% of Oregon foster children don't currently have a CASA**, despite the state statutory mandate of a CASA for every child in state care. Local CASA programs simply lack the funding to meet this goal, especially since our state provides only 19% of funding for CASA programs.

Children with CASAs are less likely to suffer re-abuse and are more likely to find a permanent home, spend an average of five months less time in foster care, and do better in school. New CASA volunteers are waiting to be trained across Oregon – only held back by insufficient staffing capacity due to inadequate funding. Please co-sponsor and pass HB 4141 to invest \$2.6 million to recruit and train a larger and more diverse group of new CASAs to serve Oregon foster children.

Feel free to contact me jrome@umchs.org, Dave Hunt (DaveH@strategies360.com), Rep. Gary Leif (Rep.GaryLeif@oregonlegislature.gov), or Rep. Courtney Neron (Rep.CourtneyNeron@oregonlegislature.gov) with any questions or concerns. I appreciate your support of the vulnerable foster children served by CASAs.

Once again **THANK YOU Rep Smith** for coming together on behalf of our Oregon children!



Jesus Rome

Umatilla-Morrow CASA Program Manager