



Oregon's judges support HB 4141: a CASA for every child



MAR 02 2020

Multnomah County

"The CASA program is one of the most useful tools a judge has when a child in a case faces the possibility of falling through the cracks in a system where caseworkers have high caseloads. They bring a fresh set of eyes to help the court ensure a ward of the court is receiving the services they need to ensure emotional and physical well-being."

Judge Ziomara Torres

"CASA is an important advocate for the children most at risk in our system. The volunteers take the time to delve into the important issues and provide invaluable insight to the courts."

Referee Morgan Wren Long

"The CASA for Children program and CASA volunteers are strongly committed to the children they serve, have the time and motivation to get out to see the children, investigate their circumstances, and provide helpful reports to the Court."

Judge Amy Holmes Hehn

"CASA volunteers are often the most consistent presence in a foster child's life during the length of time that a child is in foster care while their parents are working on resolving the issues that brought the child into care. They have a different perspective than the lawyers or the caseworkers and are therefore extremely helpful to the Court in developing a 'big picture' of how the child is doing in foster care."

Judge Patricia McGuire

Columbia County

"The CASA's report is always at least as important to me as the DHS caseworker's report, and sometimes more so. Often, this is because the CASA has the time to provide me with more details about the child(ren) than does the caseworker, especially in families where there are multiple children with varying strengths, needs, interests, and activities. I used to 'ration' my CASA appointments very carefully because there were nowhere near enough CASA volunteers to go around, but now I appoint a CASA in each case where I feel one could be beneficial to the family. I am very grateful for the expansion of this essential resource."

Judge Jenefer Grant

Douglas County

"Here in Douglas County we have had an astounding rise in children entering the child welfare system... a near 300 percent increase over the last 5 years. No one does more to protect these children than CASA. Currently, only about half of the cases in my judicial district have CASAs assigned. I firmly believe that cases where a CASA is assigned have more successful outcomes and lower rates of child abuse. Ideally, every child in foster care would have a CASA assigned to them."

Judge Luke A. Stanton

In 2018, 2,044 CASA volunteers provided advocacy for 5,728 Oregon children.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) change the story of thousands of Oregon children as the only party whose priority is the child's best interest and child's voice. CASA is a critical component in Oregon's fight against child abuse.



Jackson County

"I cannot overemphasize how valuable CASAs are to the process. They provide encouragement to struggling parents and a sense of worth to the children they represent. They also help ensure that the judges receive valuable information to make decisions about the children. Repairing families and reducing the numbers of children in foster care greatly decreases the downstream costs to our community..."

Judge Benjamin M. Bloom

"I regularly begin my review of the docket with the CASA report. Almost every morning at 11:00 in Jackson County, a child is removed, a request is made for a CASA, and that appointment is made in vain. In vain because the waitlist is several hundred children long. By supporting the funding efforts to reach additional children over the next two years, those appointments won't be in vain."

Judge Kelly Ravassipour

Deschutes County

"The CASA is the only consistent person in the child's life as the child confronts the ongoing trauma of the involvement of the child welfare "system" in their life. The CASA provides the most current and relevant information regarding the well-being of the child to the court. CASA is a critical component for the support to and of the child."

Judge Stephen P. Forte

Clackamas County

"CASAs combine the integrity of a juror, the neutrality of a Court Visitor, and the wisdom of an expert witness, as non-lawyers whose particular expertise is about the life of a particular child. Imagine that. So, a child without a CASA is denied a bridge across the troubled waters of the adversarial court process. And a judge without a CASA is at a real disadvantage in her pursuit of true justice for the children who most need it."

Judge Susie Norby

Crook/Jefferson County

"I appoint a CASA for every child placed in foster care, although there are not enough volunteers to be assigned to each child or family of siblings, because a CASA reminds me to focus on the needs of the child. I rely on the thorough reports from CASA...to remember why we are doing this important work to prevent further abuse or neglect or risk of harm to this child. I can't imagine a juvenile system without them."

Judge Annette C. Hillman

Union & Wallowa Counties

"CASA volunteers are absolutely essential to protecting the safety and well-being of the children in our foster care system. As a judge, I value the input of the CASA volunteers when making difficult decisions about the families and vulnerable children in our system."

Presiding Judge Thomas Powers