

HB 2738 A -A3 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Prepared By: Michael Graham, Fiscal Analyst

Meeting Dates: 6/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to contract with a nongovernmental statewide coordinating entity to oversee the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteer Programs and services. Requires the contracted entity to ensure CASA compliance with the National CASA Association standards and with the Oregon Juvenile Code. Distributes funds to the CASA Volunteer Programs contingent on submission of annual diversity, equity, inclusion, and accountability plan to statewide coordinating entity. Appropriates \$5,670,000 to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Fund for the CASA Volunteer Program, and appropriates \$250,000 to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Fund for the Oregon CASA Network for a statewide distance training and learning program. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-A3 Removes the \$5,670,000 General Fund appropriation to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Fund for the CASA Volunteer Program; and removes the \$250,000 General Fund appropriation to the Court Appointed Special Advocate Fund for the Oregon CASA Network for a statewide distance training and learning program.

BACKGROUND:

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), also known as a Guardian ad Litem, is a specially trained volunteer appointed by a judge to represent and advocate for the best interests of an abused or neglected child in court. The Oregon CASA Network, an affiliate of the National CASA Association, is the statewide organization that supports Oregon's 22 local CASA Volunteer Programs. The local programs recruit, screen, train, and support CASA volunteers.

House Bill 2738, as amended by the -A3 amendments, requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to contract with a nongovernmental statewide coordinating entity to oversee the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteer Program and services. DAS must disburse and expend moneys in the CASA Fund to the statewide coordinating entity contracted with; however, no moneys may be distributed to a CASA Volunteer Program unless the program has submitted to the statewide coordinating entity the program's annual diversity, equity, inclusion and accountability plan. DAS must ensure that CASA Volunteer Programs comply with the state's standards and practices and with the National CASA Association's standards and practices and perform the duties and functions under the Oregon Juvenile Code. The statewide coordinating entity that oversees the CASA Volunteer Programs must ensure that each program uses metrics to track volunteer demographics and a diversity recruitment plan; adopts a mission and values statement; regularly reviews and updates its plans and policies consistent with National CASA Association's standards; conducts an annual financial audit or review; and has a sustainable growth plan. The statewide coordinating entity also must develop and provide training and education for court appointed special advocates and employees and other volunteers in CASA Volunteer Programs. Each CASA Volunteer Program may report biannually to committees of the Legislative Assembly related to the provision of court appointed special advocate programs. The measure takes effect on passage.