



Hello, Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the committee, my name is Christopher Janetzko and I'm the Executive Director of Columbia Gorge CASA. Our program is court appointed to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman Counties.

I am asking that you continue to support CASA programs across the state through approving \$6.4 million to fund the next 24 months of court appointed advocacy in Oregon. The advocacy provided by CASA helps ensure that every child experiencing foster care in our community has the opportunity to transition successfully into adulthood. Studies have shown that children with a CASA volunteer tend to perform better academically and behaviorally, have fewer placements, and are more likely to achieve permanency.

CASA's primary form of advocacy is through submitting court reports to present judges with a fuller picture of what is happening in the child's life. Trained volunteers devote hours to getting to know the stories of the children for whom they advocate. Their court reports provide a voice for that child. These reports contain both observations and recommendations regarding the best interest of the child.

It is also the goal of CASA to provide the children that we advocate for with a consistent adult presence in their life during their time in care. Harvard University reports, "The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. These relationships provide the personalized responsiveness, scaffolding, and protection that buffer children from developmental disruption."

If we want to see real long-term change we need to start investing more in children. This will help to ensure a brighter future go all Oregonians.

Thank you for your continued support of the children of the state.

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