



YAMHILL COUNTY CASA PROGRAM

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Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the committee,

My name is Sarah Shipley and I'm an active CASA with 3 current cases with the Yamhill County CASA program and I'm Chairman of the YC CASA Board of Directors. I live in McMinnville. I'm submitting written testimony today to ask that you continue to fund court appointed special advocate programs throughout Oregon and approve the Oregon CASA Network's request for \$6.4 million which will greatly benefit all Oregon CASA programs over the next two years.

I have been a CASA for 15 years and served as Executive Director of YC CASA for three years. I feel that the CASA fills a desperately needed role for the youth who come under care of the courts. My current cases include three non-verbal teens. These youth are so deserving of advocacy. When I read back through the case files, each has had multiple trips through the system and been irreparably harmed by a combination of developmental delays and trauma. In preparing for this testimony, I checked in with my DHS caseworker about what she sees as the greatest need and she said – additional funding for DHS so that the caseworkers aren't so overwhelmed but can have case aides and lighter loads so we don't burn through the good caseworkers so quickly. Since this particular request is in support of the work done through the CASA program, I would say that her statement makes the CASA request even more urgent because we are doing this work today. I have done research, created tables, and provided key links and info to the caseworker because I know that she is the one on point to get these services for the youth. You may have been reading the state and local press articles on the needs of youth in the special education system and how those youth so often are "cheated" by shortened education days. My team (Caseworker, Resource Parents, and myself) have spent 5 months bringing one of the youth I represent back to full day education. I have spent 2 years working to get trauma therapy for a non-verbal teen and have just now gotten the needed assessment so we have to begin the difficult search for Trauma Informed CBT for this youth. I believe our system does not serve these most vulnerable youth well and the CASAs are on the frontline of that battle for more and better services. Anything that puts more advocacy for these youth on the ground will serve Oregon well in the future.

Regards,

Sarah Shipley
CASA Volunteer Advocate, CASA Peer Coordinator, Board Chair of YC CASA
Yamhill County CASA Program