



Good morning, Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the committee, my name is Aubrey Henshaw. I am the Program Specialist with the Oregon CASA Network and live in Baker City. We are honored and grateful to be joined by you all today.

I am here requesting that our state allot the \$6.4 million to fund Oregon CASA programs so that we can continue to support, maintain, and strengthen program services to children in care. Since our last receipt of state-funding, I have proudly been a part of implementing projects supporting the legislative ask for more consistent training and enhanced focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion. In less than a year, we have launched a state-wide Learning Management System with training prioritizing service to LGBTQ+ youth and ICWA and over 200 support resources made available. Since going live with this system in November, 327 continuing education hours have been registered for, at no extra cost to programs. It has also given access to program support features, that some programs have never had, increasing staff efficiency, reducing costs, and allowing them to build capacity in more important areas. Our equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts have also been robust with 1,100+ hours accumulated through training, capacity building, and direct support instilling more sustainability of EDI in the network. While these are exciting feats for the OCN, most state funding is directly allocated to the programs for operations. Funding these programs is unique in that money spent has a high return of investment. In 2020 alone, over \$5 million was returned in volunteer service hours across the state.

It has been argued for decades that child abuse and childhood trauma is the leading public health issue. Nationally, in 2018, the total lifetime economic burden for child abuse and neglect was founded at \$592 billion, trumping many other high-profile issues. Current and future community health greatly, if not solely, relies on our efforts to prevent, support, intervene, and redirect the impacts of child abuse and neglect. CASA volunteers play a direct role in accomplishing this devastating need by giving children, youth, and young adults reliable, trusting advocates; which can in turn influence the totality of this public health issue.

Please allow Oregon CASA programs to continue this essential service to our children, families, and futures. Thank you for your time and consideration today.

Aubrey Henshaw, MPH, Program Specialist, Oregon CASA Network.