

Submitter: Marian Montgomery  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

Good evening, Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the committee. My name is Marian Montgomery. I am a volunteer with CASA of Eastern Oregon and live in La Grande, Oregon. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to give input to your committee.

I am here today with my request that our state allot the \$6.4 million dollars to fund Oregon CASA programs so that my program, CASA of Eastern Oregon, can continue to maintain its service to children in Malheur, Baker, Grant, Harney, Lake, and Union counties. In addition to each program in the state providing nearly \$100 thousand (or more) worth of volunteer hours each year and being one of the most efficient state-mandated programs, I also have some personal reflections to share as to why I believe in the value of CASA.

In my over 30 years as a special education and reading teacher, I witnessed firsthand the difference CASAs made in the lives of my students who were in foster care. It was so important for one person to talk to all parties involved and intelligently and compassionately advocate for these children. The children who had a CASA were impacted in a positive way. This prompted me to become a CASA once I retired from teaching.

I have only been a CASA for one child, but would like to share the impact that CASA of Eastern Oregon had on him. As a CASA, I regularly visited the child and talked with all parties, getting a sense of the child's needs and what was or wasn't happening so I could help ensure that his needs were being met. Not only did I advocate for this child and make recommendations to the court, but CASA of Eastern Oregon also provided tangible and much appreciated support to the resource family and birth family. For my child this included a car seat, clothes, toys for Christmas and his birthday, and pull-ups. Eventually my CASA child returned to his mother's care. CASA of Eastern Oregon played a part in helping this child be in a safe and positive environment until this happened.

Please allow us to continue our essential service to children and families. Thank you for your time today.

Marian Montgomery  
Volunteer CASA  
CASA of Eastern Oregon