

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 30, 2023

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Chairwoman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science  
And Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Commerce, Justice, Science  
And Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

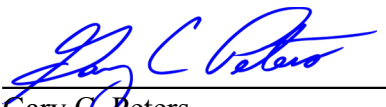
Dear Chair Shaheen and Ranking Member Moran:

We respectfully urge you to fully fund the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. This program is critical to the over 250,000 abused or neglected children who have highly trained and deeply dedicated CASA advocates appointed on their behalf, and to the over 407,000 child victims who are still waiting for the presence of a consistent, caring adult to speak for their best interests in the courtroom and in the community. This funding is critical to improving outcomes for every abused and neglected child, as was the intention of Congress when it enacted the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

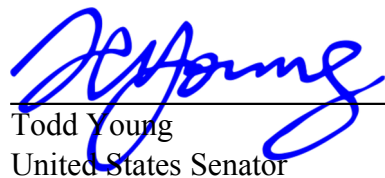
CASA programs across the country provide specially trained and supervised advocates who devote sustained, long-term attention to the needs and rights of child victims of abuse and neglect. Judges appoint CASA advocates to their most difficult and complex cases to watch over and advocate on behalf of the best interests of abused and neglected children, to make sure they do not get lost in the overburdened legal and social service system or languish in inappropriate group or foster homes. In addition to providing direct services to child victims, CASA program funds are used to ensure that every child receives the highest possible quality of services and care through national training, program standards, technical assistance, and resources that utilize evidence-based and trauma-informed practices.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that the number of children in foster care has drastically increased since 2012, which many state child welfare agencies are attributing to children impacted by the national opioid crisis. This has created a higher demand for services to be provided by highly trained CASA advocates. Children who languish in the foster care system without a safe and permanent home face diminished chances for success. Abused and neglected children often experience trafficking, homelessness, substance use disorders, mental health issues, teen pregnancy, and lower academic achievement. Over 97,000 CASA advocates across the country seek to change the trajectory of these children's lives, in part with Congressional support. Local CASA programs – supported through state offices across the country – utilize this critical funding to deliver dedicated advocacy on behalf of abused and neglected children in communities nationwide.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Todd Young  
United States Senator



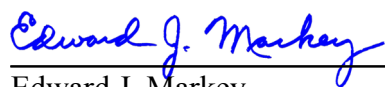
Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



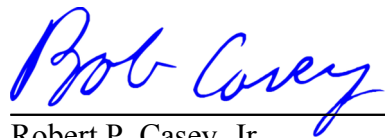
Raphael Warnock  
United States Senator



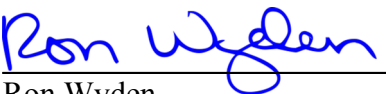
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



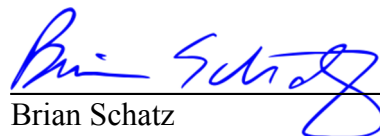
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



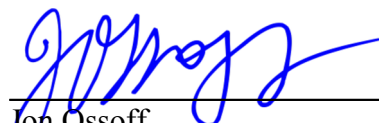
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



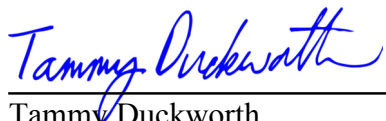
Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



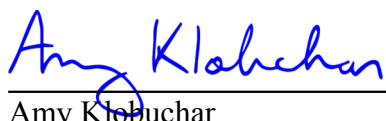
Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



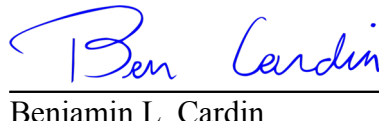
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



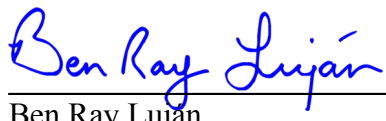
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



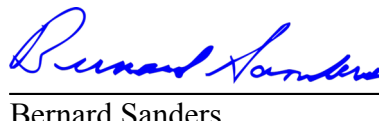
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator




Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



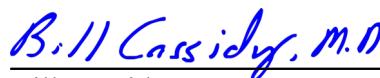
Jon Tester  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator