



News

For Immediate Release

May 16, 2008

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Lawmakers Issue Urgent Call to Help Abused Children

CASA Appointed to Serve Children — Adding to Volunteer Shortage

A group of state lawmakers is taking action to keep abused and neglected children from falling through the cracks in the foster care system. Under the leadership of Representative Patrick Rose, members of the House of Representatives Committee on Human Services are calling on all Texans to consider becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate™, or CASA.

In a rare move, the nine members of the House of Representatives Committee on Human Services, came together to sign a letter asking fellow legislators to take concrete and immediate action to improve the lives of foster children in their districts by recruiting CASA volunteers.

"As public officials, we need to get serious about improving outcomes for abused and neglected children in our state's care. Encouraging Texans to serve as CASAs is a real way for legislators to take action," said Rep. Patrick Rose. "Increasing the capacity of Texas CASA to mentor and advocate on behalf of these children will make a real difference in their lives."

The letter asks that legislators send their constituents information about CASA, help connect CASA program to civic groups, and write editorials in their local newspapers about the need for CASA volunteers.

CASA volunteers are screened, trained, and then appointed by judges to advocate for one foster child or set of siblings at a time. They research case records and speak to everyone involved in a child's life, including family members, teachers, doctors, lawyers, social workers and others. Their independent assessments and advocacy help judges make better decisions in foster care cases.

Nine lawmakers from both parties signed the request that went out to all members of the Texas House of Representatives. They are Susan King (R, Abilene), Elliot Naishtat (D, Austin), John E. Davis (D, Houston), Rob Eissler (R, The Woodlands), Bryan Hughes (R, Marshall), Abel Herrero (D, Corpus Christi), Tan Parker (R, Flower Mound), Paula Pierson (D, Arlington).

"We are deeply honored by the action of the House Committee, said Joe Gagen, CEO of Texas CASA". "This is a positive action that will enhance CASA programs' ability to improve the lives of abused and neglected children".

For more information call Dennise Jackson at Texas CASA or go to www.texascasa.org.

About Texas CASA

Texas CASA, which was formed in 1989, serves the 68 local CASA programs currently operating statewide by providing: funding; training; technical assistance; coordination for program expansion and development; and tools and strategies for raising public awareness of child abuse and the need for volunteer advocates.

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