

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 29, 2026**

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### **KCN Applauds Passage of SB 17 by the Senate**

The Kentucky CASA Network is pleased to support Kentucky Senate Bill 17 introduced by Senator Brandon Storm and passed by the Kentucky Senate on January 27th that will amend sections of KRS 620.500-550, which provide important guidelines and oversight governing the Kentucky Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program. SB 17 will modernize Kentucky law governing the CASA network to enable local CASA programs and CASA volunteers to more effectively advocate for the Commonwealth's abused and neglected children.

"CASA volunteers play a critical role in standing up for children during some of the most difficult moments in their lives," said Senator Storm. "This legislation aims to ensure our laws are clear, current, and structured in a way that supports strong local programs while maintaining accountability at the state level." SB 17 reflects a continued commitment to protecting children and strengthening Kentucky's child welfare system through thoughtful, practical updates to existing law.

Notable changes to the proposed legislation include:

- Keeping the rule that the Department for Community Based Services employees cannot serve as CASA volunteers due to the conflict of interest but allowing other employees from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to become CASA volunteers. KCN State Director/CEO Andrea Bruns noted, "When this Statute was written, the Cabinet structure was different and DCBS did not exist. By allowing Kentuckians who work in other capacities at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, such as at the Department for Public Health, to become volunteers, the state is opening the door for more people to serve as CASA volunteers for abused and neglected children."
- Reducing the number of required board members from 15 to 12. It can be challenging for regional programs that operate in predominantly less populated rural areas to recruit board members. This update aligns with the rapid expansion of services to those rural counties.
- Expressly identifying Kentucky CASA Network (KCN) as the statutorily authorized state association for CASA programs in Kentucky. This will better equip the KCN to continue to adopt state standards and monitor for compliance with state law and national standards governing CASA programs to better ensure high-quality, best-interest child advocacy.

### **About the Kentucky CASA Network**

The Kentucky CASA Network is the state association for Court Appointed Special Advocates, as recognized in the Kentucky Revised Statutes, with a mission to support the development, growth, and continuation of local CASA programs in Kentucky. CASA programs recruit and train volunteers to advocate on behalf of children who have come into the court system as a result of dependency, neglect, or abuse. In 2025, there were 1,395 CASA volunteers in the Commonwealth. Nearly 1,200 of those volunteers served 3,387 children throughout the year.

For more information, please visit [www.kentuckycasanetwork.org](http://www.kentuckycasanetwork.org).