



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1973</b>		DATE: <b>2/8/2024</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Ways and Means</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>GINA CLEMENT</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-893-2272</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>CAPITAL CITY CASA</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>
ADDRESS: <b>600 MONROE STREET, SUITE 100</b>		
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>gina@capitalcitycasa.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/7/2024 5:38 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>		



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JESSICA PETRIE</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-635-6092</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>KIDS WIN MISSOURI</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 1805</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65102</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2024 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JESSICA SEITZ</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-415-6228</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI KIDS FIRST</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>520 DIX ROAD, SUITE C</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65109</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2024 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JULIE SEYMORE</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>636-3573533</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF NORTHEAST MISSOURI</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>989 HERITAGE PARKWAY</b>			
CITY: <b>WENTZVILLE</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63385</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2024 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KELLY HILL</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-442-4670</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>HEART OF MISSOURI CASA</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>105 EAST ASH STREET, SUITE 102</b>			
CITY: <b>COLUMBIA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65203</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2024 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>LAURA FARMER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>417-864-6202</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>CASA OF SOUTHWEST MISSOURI</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>627 N. GLENSTONE AVE.</b>			
CITY: <b>SPRINGFIELD</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65802</b>
EMAIL: <b>lfarmer@casaswmo.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2024 5:15 PM</b>	
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Dear Representative Riley and Committee, I wanted to submit this written testimony for informational purposes and in support of HB 1973, which impacts tax credit contributions to child advocacy organizations. My name is Laura Farmer, and I am the Executive Director of CASA of Southwest Missouri. CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) organizations are one of the three types of organizations that benefit from Champion for Children Tax Credits. Our nonprofit recruits, trains, and empowers community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children in the foster care system in Greene, Christian, and Taney Counties. In 2023, CASA of Southwest Missouri served 459 children in foster care through our volunteer advocacy program and an additional 849 children through our CASA Clubhouse (one-of-a-kind activity center for children in foster care), a total of over 1,300 children served. Our CASA volunteer program makes a huge impact for children who have been abused and neglected. Research shows that when a child has a CASA volunteer assigned to their case, they have more stability in their foster home, they achieve more in school, they exit the foster care system more quickly, and they are far less likely to re-enter foster care due to repeated abuse. Our program is vital for vulnerable children who need stability, consistency, and safety while in foster care. Unfortunately, like many CASA programs in the state of Missouri, CASA of Southwest Missouri does not have enough volunteers to serve all the children in foster care in our three-county service area. Furthermore, there are many counties that do not yet have a CASA program established, meaning their children cannot benefit from the impact of a CASA volunteer. For example, in our three-county service area of Greene, Christian, and Taney Counties, there are over 1,300 children in foster care. Currently, we only have enough volunteers to serve 35% of the children in foster care. Counties in southwest Missouri, like Barry, Lawrence, Stone, Webster, and many others, do not have a current CASA program established. There are hundreds of children being left unserved in the state of Missouri. Our goal is to serve 100% of the children in foster care in our three-county area by 2030. We would also like to explore the idea of expanding into southwest Missouri counties that are not currently served by a CASA program or help other CASA programs become established to ensure that every child in foster care has access to an advocate. This is a goal that we can achieve if we are able to generate more revenue for our organization and other CASA programs. The Champion for Children tax credits assist CASA programs, like mine, to increase donations that enable us to recruit, train, and support more volunteers to serve more children in foster care. Our donors enjoy the benefits of the tax credit while also supporting our mission. Almost our entire budget of \$1.2 million is locally donated by individuals who could benefit from the tax credit. The increase to the tax credit to 70%, as proposed in HB 1973, would allow our organization to continue to remain competitive for local donations from individuals who want to support victim serving programs. Increasing the cap to at least \$2.5 million or more would also assist our communication with donors to allow them more confidence in the stability

of the credit. Currently, many of our local donors do not file the claim due to the uncertainty of the credit due to the low cap. If the claims exceed the cap, the 50% tax credit percentage is apportioned based on the amount of claims. Donors are often frustrated by this factor regarding the tax credit and would much prefer certainty in their donation. We agree with their sentiments, especially as we want to build trust with our supporters and the public and make the process of giving simple and straightforward. Additionally, with the tax deadline extensions that were allowed during the pandemic, the current claims for the Champion for Children tax credit have taken a while to rebound from pre-COVID numbers. We anticipate that the claims will only increase in years to come, especially with large projects, such as capital campaigns. This is why increasing the cap to at least \$2.5 million or more would be essential for CASA programs, like ours. With an increased percentage and cap to the Champion for Children tax credit, supporters of CASA of Southwest Missouri would have more confidence in the stability of the tax credit, which would result in increased donations and support. Increased revenue would mean that CASA can train more volunteers and ultimately serve more children in foster care. It is a win-win for the state of Missouri and children in foster care. Thank you for your time and consideration of this information. Respectfully, Laura Farmer



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>LEANNE REESE</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-256-1445</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>1000 WEST NIFONG BOULEVARD, BUILDING 4, SUITE 201D</b>			
CITY: <b>COLUMBIA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65203</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>NIKKI STRONG</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-634-4876</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI COALITION FOR CHILDREN</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>213 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:                  ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>arniedienoff@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/8/2024 11:55 PM</b>

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**I Opposed these Tax-Credits. They are costing our State Millions!**