



Attachment 6

3-18-2019

2-26-19

House Bill H-170 - First Judicial District CASA Program's opposition

The First Judicial District CASA Program conditionally opposes, in the bills current form, House Bill 170 amending of Section 16-1648 of the Idaho Code as proposed for the purpose of adding to existing Idaho code that the Department of Health and Welfare must notify parents or concerned person maintaining the custody and care of a child of their rights to remain silent, to consult an attorney or to have an attorney present during child protection investigations.

Reason for opposition- Such action will severely limit the investigation of child protection cases and put Idaho's vulnerable child victims at further risk of harm or imminent danger. The ability to question parents in child protection cases is critical to determining the events that happened, substantiating alleged abuse and providing factual and informative reports to the child protection judges. Child Protection Courts are sealed proceedings. Parents are included in discussion of their cases and are given opportunity to participate in case plans that provide services to the parents with the goal of increasing the health of the family so that the child can be safely reunified. These efforts require the openness and honesty of the parents. These civil hearings are very different from criminal hearings and parents are given multiple changes to meet the terms of their case plans, with clear goals and timelines to achieve reunification. The success of child protection courts is contingent upon the cooperation and involvement of the parents and their interest and ability to work closely with the Department and other parties.

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Our mission is to recruit, train, and support a diverse network of dedicated Guardian ad Litem CASA volunteers to represent abused and neglected children for the communities we serve.

KJ Brant, CEO
 Don Robinson, President; Sheriff Ben Wolfinger, Vice-President;
 Ashley Lenz, Treasurer; Luke Malek, Secretary;
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