



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Senator Bonacic's Bill to Establish Court Appointed Special Advocates Program in Statute Passes Senate

JOHN J. BONACIC February 27, 2018



(Albany, NY)- State Senator John J. Bonacic (R/C/I-Mt. Hope) announced today that legislation he sponsors (S.2059) to establish a Court Appointed Special Advocates Program (CASA) in statute has passed the Senate. The bill would establish CASA in statute and codify existing Office of Court Administration (OCA) rules pertaining to CASA.

The Office of Court Administration established the CASA program in 1991 under the Task Force on Permanency Planning to promote and support trained community volunteer

advocacy programs. The role of CASA is to assist Family Courts in making crucial decisions affecting children who have been abused and neglected. There are 21 local CASA programs providing services to the family courts in 31 counties.

“CASA programs throughout New York State provide an invaluable resource to our judicial system, and the volunteers who give up their time to assist in difficult situations should be commended,” said Senator Bonacic.

This bill is enabling legislation that codifies the CASA program and accompanying OCA regulations. By doing so, it makes clear the Legislature's support for the program, provides a consistent interpretation of CASA's role within the Family Court and strengthens CASA's standing in its important work on behalf of abused and neglected children in the State's foster care system.