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February 19, 2026

The Honorable Ken Weyler, Chairman  
Fiscal Committee of the General Court and

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte  
and the Honorable Council  
State House  
Concord, N.H. 03301

**REQUESTED ACTION**

Pursuant to RSA 604-A:1-b, Additional Funding, authorize the Judicial Council to receive an additional appropriation from funds not otherwise appropriated in the total amount of \$250,000 effective upon Fiscal Committee and Governor and Council approval, through June 30, 2027. 100% General Funds.

Funding is to be budgeted in 02-07-07-070010-11010000 ABUSE & NEGLECT (NON-CASA) as follows:

<b>Class/Expense</b>	<b>Class Title</b>	<b>Current Budget</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>
108/500751	Provider Payments Legal Services	\$360,000	\$250,000	\$610,000

**EXPLANATION**

This account funds the work of assigned counsel for non-CASA guardians ad litem to represent parents in abuse and neglect cases when a CASA volunteer is not available.

Pursuant to the State’s statutory order of appointment in RSA 169-C:10, when a court appoints a guardian ad litem (GAL) to a case, that appointment first goes to a volunteer GAL from CASA of New Hampshire. If CASA does not have a volunteer available, the court then appoints a private, non-CASA, GAL to serve as a GAL. The Judicial Council pays the bills for these non-CASA GALs. The assigned counsel system is based on an hourly rate of payment, with a structure of fee caps in place through court rules.

The statutory order of appointment set forth in RSA 169-C:10 specifies that “[i]n cases brought pursuant to this chapter involving a neglected or abused child, the court shall appoint a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or other approved program guardian ad litem for the child. If a CASA or other approved program guardian ad litem is unavailable for appointment, the court may then appoint an attorney or other guardian ad litem as the guardian ad litem for the child.”

Total FY25 expenditures for this line were \$552,231. As of the end of January 2026, year-to-date expenditures for this line have been \$324,259.

The funds currently available in account 02-07-07-070010-10110000 are insufficient to pay the court-approved invoices expected to arrive between now and the end of the current fiscal year. Based on the monthly average of expenditures year to date, the Judicial Council anticipates that the account will require the addition of at least \$250,000 to meet the anticipated expenditures in this line through June 30, 2026.

This agency will remain at your service to provide any requested information concerning the critical importance of this additional funding to the orderly administration of justice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Jay Buckey

Jay M. Buckey  
Executive Director