

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
May 6-7, 2009**

**Resolution No. 35: Reiterate Support for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
Program**

Origin: Commission on Children & Youth

Submitted by: Commission on Children & Youth

WHEREAS, The American Legion has long been an advocate of adequate social and protective services for children; and

WHEREAS, According to the U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, there are three million alleged cases of child abuse and neglect reported annually, with nearly one million of these substantiated and/or indicated as victims of maltreatment; and

WHEREAS, In 1976, a Seattle judge conceived the idea of using trained volunteers to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children in court, thereby providing the court with sufficient information and helping to ensure that the children live in safe and loving environments; and

WHEREAS, There are currently 954 CASA programs operating across this country, with more than 59,000 men and women serving as volunteer advocates for children; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, over 243,000 children were served by CASA volunteers; and

WHEREAS, In May 2003, The American Legion adopted Resolution No. 56 Support for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 6-7, 2009, That The American Legion reiterates its support for the aims and mission of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts are encouraged to cooperate with other concerned state, county and community organizations to assist those children and youth involved in the juvenile justice system; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts are encouraged to assist their local CASA program, wherever possible, to recruit quality volunteers, including qualified Legionnaires, to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in court; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That Departments and Posts are urged to raise community awareness concerning the vital role that Court Appointed Special Advocates play in providing safe, permanent and nurturing homes for abused and neglected children, thus enabling them to develop into mature, responsible and productive adults.