



TO: Chair Barker and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Iris Maria Chavez, Government Affairs Director, Stand for Children Oregon

DATE: March 31, 2015

RE: House Bill 3503

Chair Barker, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss HB 3503 with you all today. At Stand for Children, we have long worked to ensure that all students have access to high quality services that prepare them for a productive life, we believe that these services cannot be limited to those within the school building.

We have worked alongside advocates from across the human services, public safety and child welfare communities for several years through the Coalition for Safety & Savings, most notably, last full session (in 2013) to pass HB 3194, the Justice Reinvestment program. The program distributes savings from averted prison growth into community-based programs that help people succeed outside of prison.

There are many aspects of a child's life that can impact their ability to effectively engage in their classroom and their own learning. We know (through research and practice) that having healthy, stable family relationships is essential to supporting that kind of engagement, and success, in their schooling. HB 3503 continues the great work begun by HB 3194, and provides a means to better connect offenders of non-violent crimes with their families during their sentencing. This program would better allow families to remain connected, children to stay out of foster care, and thus children to be more successful in school. As families are provided the opportunity to engage with one another in stable ways during trying times, such as incarceration, we can expect the future to see lower recidivism rates, increased employment and overall increased success of families across Oregon.

We encourage you to take on this issue and thank Rep. Williamson for her commitment to our kiddos and their families.