



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON

April 7, 2015

To: Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood  
Senator Sara Gelsler, Chair  
Senator Alan Olsen, Vice-Chair  
[maria.i.hernandez@state.or.us](mailto:maria.i.hernandez@state.or.us)

Re: SB 939 Relating to Children of Incarcerated Parents Support -1 amendment

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League of Women Voters believes that early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children.

The Department of Corrections has provided parenting programs within the prison system in partnership with educational and treatment programs. These programs have been in jeopardy when DOC budgets have been cut. In order to maintain these programs, partnerships with non-profits have been proposed. The LWVOR supports these programs for the parents and children of incarcerated parents. The loss of a parent during incarceration is traumatic, and supervised visitation during incarceration can maintain the relationship. The mothers in the Coffee Creek program have shown behavioral improvement within the prison and incentive to become better parents when they return to the community. This program would also benefit fathers and their children.

The League believes that services for incarcerated parents and children of incarcerated parents can prevent further involvement of the family members in the criminal justice system. With improved parental role models, the children are more likely to succeed in school and recreational activities and more likely to stay out of the juvenile system. The parents are more likely to successfully complete parole requirements and less likely to recidivate and return to prison. These parenting programs can reduce recidivism and lower the prison population as well as keep their children out of future criminal behavior. The League encourages support for these parenting programs as an investment for the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Robin Wisdom in cursive.

Robin Wisdom  
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Karen Nibler in cursive.

Karen Nibler  
Social Policy Coordinator