

DATE: April 7, 2015
TO: Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood
FROM: Stacy Michaelson, Association of Oregon Counties
SUBJECT: SB 939

Chair Gelser, Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Stacy Michaelson, Health and Human Services Policy Manager for the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). While AOC has not yet taken a position on this bill (our next Legislative Committee meeting is a week away), I want to highlight a few priority areas for AOC that are highlighted in this bill.

This session, one of our association's top priorities has been partnership between the public safety and human services worlds. Our members have expressed a deep interest in targeting factors that are likely to lead to involvement with the criminal justice system and learning how Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) impact lives. We have primarily been working on programs and services aimed at reducing incarceration and recidivism among adults, but we also know that having an incarcerated parent is an ACE and has a potential impact on future justice-involvement of children.

Targeting families touched by the criminal justice system is a prevention effort very well aligned with the goals AOC is pursuing. There is a high likelihood that incarcerated parents have high ACE scores themselves and could benefit from positive modeling and parenting classes to learn skills that may not have been present in their own families of origin. Helping these individuals to be better parents when they come out of the corrections system is one way we can mitigate the potential negative impact of their incarceration on their children. Further, involving the children helps ensure that families can stay attached during a parent's sentence.

Again, this bill has not yet gone through AOC's internal process for an official position, but it is aligned with our priorities and we look forward to seeing the benefits of this program.

Thank you.