



June 16, 2015

Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
HB 3503: Relating to Family Sentencing Alternatives

Clackamas County supports HB 3503: The Board of County Commissioners supports HB 3503, which directs the Department of Corrections to establish a Family Sentencing Alternatives Pilot Program in partnership with circuit courts, county community corrections agencies, and Department of Human Services.

HB 3503 would allow both women and men who receive downward departure sentences – those who could potentially be sentenced to prison, but are sentenced to community supervision instead – who are the legal guardians of a minor child, and who had physical custody of the child at the time of the offense, to enter a pilot program that would provide comprehensive supervision where accountability and the child’s well-being are of primary importance. These caseloads, which would be kept intentionally low in numbers, would focus on drug and alcohol treatment, parenting skills, mental health treatment, and life skills classes. These cases would be managed in partnership between Community Corrections and the Oregon Department of Human Services.

In Clackamas County, the prison population at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility is burgeoning. As the only Department of Corrections facility where women are housed, this growing population could create the need to open an additional prison to accommodate female prisoners. The opening and continued operation of a prison is an expensive proposition – upwards of \$90 per day per incarcerated person. Based on costs of a similar program in Washington, the Family Sentencing Alternative Pilot Program could cost roughly \$31 per day per supervised offender – a 66% cost saving per offender.

Clackamas County Corrections strives to ensure that offenders being reintroduced into society have the tools and support they need to thrive and contribute to their families and communities. Supportive services for parents in the criminal justice system are particularly important, as they have been shown to break inter-generational cycles of crime. We urge a “yes” vote on HB 3503, and request that Clackamas County be considered as a participant in the pilot project.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.