



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

June 17, 2015

To: Joint Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee
Senator Chip Shields, Co-Chair
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Co-Chair
Members of the Committee
WaysandMeans.PublicSafetySub@state.or.us

Re: HB 3503 A – Relating to offenders with minor children - Support

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League has a position on Adult Corrections that strongly favors increased use of alternatives to incarceration where possible. The League believes that The Family Sentencing Alternative Pilot Program proposed in this bill is a good alternative to incarceration.

The Family Sentencing Alternative allows the court an option for parents convicted of nonviolent offenses. The offender may be assessed for the ability to comply with intense supervision and services in the community and be permitted to remain in the community with their children. This pilot will avoid not only the costs of incarceration but also the cost of foster care and state support of these children. The children will benefit from the continued attachment to the parent and the services provided during community supervision. The League asks that this option be available to the courts and to the corrections programs.

In the parenting program at Coffee Creek staff have worked to rekindle the relationship between mothers and their children, but the relationship can be maintained, at home, in this pilot. The recidivism rate among participants in the parenting program has been very low, and offenders who are allowed to remain with their children should have the incentive to comply with community supervision. The children will avoid the trauma of separation and removal from their parent or the move to another home. The family unit may become stronger with services, and children may become more successful in the long run.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in cursive.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Karen Nibler in cursive.

Karen Nibler
Social Policy Coordinator