



Oregon Foster Youth CONNECTION

Improving the Oregon foster care system through advocacy, activism and leadership.

We Support HB 3503: Strong Families, Safe Communities

House Bill 3503 would create a pilot program allowing parents convicted of certain nonviolent offenses to be assessed for intense supervision and appropriate services while remaining united with their children in the community. This program would hold parents who have committed crimes accountable while strengthening their bond to their children and increasing the stability of their families. By keeping families together, Oregon can break the cycle of crime and increase public safety with stronger families and safer communities.

We support HB 3503 because it represents a smart approach to public safety that is good for families, for communities, and for the state's bottom line. Here's why we need this change:

- **Good for families:** More than 20,000 children in Oregon have a parent in prison. These children face a number of hardships and are at greater risk of being placed in foster care. Due to this they also experience a range of emotional and behavioral challenges, which often manifest as more serious problems later in life. Preserving and strengthening family relationships is one of the most effective ways of combatting these challenges and improving the well-being of both children and parents.
- **Good for communities:** Research shows that justice-involved adults who are able to maintain close ties with their families are more successful in the community and less likely to commit additional crimes.
- **Good for the state's bottom line:** Supervising individuals at home costs far less than sending them to prison. A similar alternative sentencing program in Washington – which served as the model for HB 3503 – costs about one-third of what it would cost to keep the program participants behind bars.

With personal experience on how this bill would impact families, and on behalf of the members of OFYC, we support HB 3503.

OFYC's 2015 Legislative Action Team
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