

Beth Melnick  
2347 Ne 9th Ave.  
Portland, Oregon,  
97212

April 3, 2017

Senate Human Services Committee  
900 Court St. NE, S-405,  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

First I want to thank the committee for their diligent service in navigating complex and challenging issues on behalf of our state.

I am writing in support of the **Family Preservation Project** at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility.

The cycle of intergenerational incarceration is, statistically, a well established fact. The Department of Corrections and the foster care system have unintentionally become the symbiotic parts of an entrenched machine dependent upon our children to sustain itself. All this at great cost to the taxpayer. It is a punitive animal that punishes not only those who've broken the law but their children as well.

By real restorative therapy, education and support, the Family Preservation Project successfully interrupts the cycle of feeding the children of inmates into the prison system. I believe the legislature should throw everything they can behind this program which is currently extending various services to 100 inmates and their families. Women in prison have, on average, 2.5 children and other family members who are affected. In many cases the women are first time offenders and/or have public health needs that led them to prison. Family Preservation Project is preventative medicine for our society which has saddled the DOC and other agencies with illnesses with which it is not designed to deal.

Family Preservation Project is the ounce of prevention to the very expensive pound or cure we all pay for at the expense of the lives of our next generations. I believe the Family Preservation Project can, in the same progressive tradition as the Oregon System and the Bottle Bill, serve as a template in other states for breaking the wasteful cycle of intergenerational incarceration

These are uncertain times. For those who need the services provided by our government times are always uncertain, at best. As citizens with good intentions it is hard to know where to put our attention and support. Of all the many worthwhile causes in need of help I have chosen to support the Family Preservation Project with my limited time, my money, and my voice. I hope you will choose to fight for it as well.

Sincerely,

Beth Melnick