



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

April 4, 2017

To: House Judiciary Committee
Representative Jeff Barker, Chair

Re: **HB 3380**, Parent Alternative Sentencing, **Support**

Chair Barker and Members of the committee:

My name is Barbara Ross and I am here representing the League of Women Voters of Oregon. The LWV is a grassroots organization with members across the state. The League “strongly favors increased use of alternatives to incarceration where possible.” We also support “policies and programs ... that promote the wellbeing, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of children.” HB 3380 does just that.

The objective of HB 3380 is to keep children with their parents even when the parents have committed crimes that would ordinarily result in a prison sentence. The program is modeled after a successful one in Washington State.

Participants in the program are given a thorough assessment to determine what they will need to safely stay in the community. Their individualized program is a combination of supervision, accountability, and support. They are given direction and coaching focused on improving their parenting skills. Research shows that the chance to keep their children with them is a powerful motivator to help avoid new criminal acts.

If parents can successfully be diverted from prison terms and effectively supervised in the community, we can avoid the tragic impact of having families torn apart. While foster parents may have the best of intentions, they are never a substitute for your own parents. If we can help these offenders be good parents, the result can be a win for everyone. The state avoids the cost of foster care and also the cost of a prison bed for the mother or father. The children avoid the trauma of separation from parents, and the recidivism rate for this group will remain low.

We should continue the program that started last biennium as a pilot, fine tuning the implementation to make it even more successful. If we keep parents who qualify out of prison, they can build stronger families, a goal we all share. This is just one component in our ongoing effort to avoid opening a new women's prison. I urge you to support HB 3380

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Barbara Ross in black ink.

Barbara Ross
LWVOR Adult Correction Portfolio