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Testimony of Tira Hubbard, Sr. Deputy Parole/Probation Officer
Jackson County Community Justice
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Chair Barker, members of the committee:

My name is Tira Hubbard, I am the supervising Probation Officer in Jackson County, assigned to the Family Sentencing Alternative Program. I have been employed by Jackson County for 8 years. Prior to that, I worked in the non-profit sector for 13 years as a victim's advocate, specializing in domestic and sexual abuse.

Jackson County is one of five pilot sites for the Family Sentencing Alternative Program and I am the lead PO for FSAP in our county. To date there have been 9 participants in our program, impacting 19 kiddos. All of our participants are women. There are at least 10 others who we would like to be in the program but who did not qualify because of the person crimes exclusions in the first bill that initially passed the program. Our experience is that in order to be high enough on the sentencing grid to qualify for a Downward Departure prison sentence, the offenders' criminal history often includes person crimes. Particularly for women, these person crimes may have come as a result of abusive relationships combined with drug use but are not patterns of violent behavior.

As the lead PO for this program, I have first-hand experience working with the women who are participating and can tell you about its success and why our department is deeply committed to this program.

I think the best way I can describe our program is to tell you all about some of the women and children in it. I am currently working with a young woman I'll call Marie. Marie is a brilliant woman who studied criminal justice student in college. She was a 4.0 student a few terms a way from graduating when she began using and dealing drugs. She was introduced to methamphetamine by the father of her children and was struggling with a history of abuse and trauma. This relationship, and her actions, totally derailed her academic goals and more tragically, sent her three children into the foster care system.

Marie was struggling with her use, relationships and engaging with Child Welfare to get her kiddos back into her care. She was on a downward departure and facing prison, if revoked. We pulled her into the FSAP program where we got her into gender responsive, trauma-informed treatment and I visit with her and the kiddos weekly. Our focus has been on

building her skills to be a successful parent, including looking at her own relationships, her stability and her educational goals. It was a bumpy ride and sometimes she relapsed, but this program works to build trust, using a relational mentor model of supervision. Rather than me catching her relapse, she told me about it and asked for help. Working together, we got her back on track. Her kids are now back with her, she's a really present and loving mom and she starts school again next week to finish up her degree. Marie continues to work to mend the harm her addiction caused her family and community, but is on track to great success.

One of the pillars of our work and keys to our success, is using a gender responsive and trauma informed model as our approach to working with women and their children. The vast majority of women that end up involved in the criminal justice system come out of a cycle that starts with childhood abuse which leads to mental health issues that they self-medicate with drugs.

Implementing FSAP in Jackson County further sparked our efforts to use a risk assessment that is specific to women, the Women's Risk Needs Assessment or WRNA has been adopted by the DOC and Community Corrections in Oregon. I am one of the state-wide trainers for the WRNA and have personally conducted about 150 of these assessments. Of those, only two of the women didn't have abuse or trauma needs. With this knowledge, we've changed how we do supervision with our high risk female offenders. We now use a trauma informed approach to work with women and run a gender responsive caseload. By doing this we aren't traumatizing them and can instead work on the root cause of the problems, rather than just the crime and addiction, which I consider to be the symptoms.

You might ask what does trauma informed mean. Here's an example. For anyone, having an observed UA (drug testing by urine sample) is an uncomfortable experience. For women who have been victims of sexual abuse and have had their personal boundaries violated in the worst way, this process re-traumatizes them and breaks down trust that is essential to our program. So we can rely on oral swabs or UA's that are conducted by a compassionate and trauma informed staff. Another example is how we respond when people relapse. Instead of automatically throwing women in jail if there is a relapse; we have instead built the rapport to talk about what triggered the relapse and give them the tools to prevent it from happening again. Creating safety plans in the home with the goal of keeping mom sober and kiddos safe. Now women tell me when they are struggling or they relapse and we can intervene early and have a greater impact, keeping kiddos safer and decreasing recidivism.

One woman and her 3 year old son really illustrate what the program can do. Mom was heavily using drugs, often sleeping in flop houses while her little kiddo was in foster care. When she came into our program, we got her into treatment and housing and she ceased using. Her son though, was terrified of me, since I show up dressed in my law enforcement clothes and bullet proof vest. Previously when mom was using, his only experiences with law enforcement, were of them arresting his mom and taking her away. When I first started to visit, he would run and hide behind the couch. To build trust we'd play a game where he pretended to be a puppy and I would scratch his belly. Now he sits on my lap while I read

him books. I've shown him how to use my handcuffs and mom has explained to him that they are for safety and sometimes grown-ups need a time out at jail to be safe. He trusts law enforcement now, as you can see from this picture that mom told me I could share. He's wearing his Cop mustache and playing with my flashlight and handcuffs. He is in school three days a week now and mom is married and successfully parenting two kids. We addressed her trauma and his and have seen a total turnaround for their family.

Our focus on treatment and accountability are a core value of this program, but what really drives it success is the common goal that the POs share with participants: to make them the best parents they can be. When my goal as a probation officer is not solely to track conditions of probation, but to help them be a great parent there is more trust, motivation and success as we work together for a common goal.

I am pleased that HB 3380 is supported by the Oregon Association of Community Corrections Directors.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.