

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

May 10, 2017

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the YWCA of Greater Portland, I respectfully request your support for HB 3380A. As one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the nation, with 2.6 million members across 300 local associations, the YWCA of Greater Portland has been serving Oregonians for over 110 years, while evolving to meet the changing needs of the women we serve. Today this role includes the administration of the Family Preservation Project, a program for mothers incarcerated at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility that utilizes a family-centered approach to assist them in their rehabilitation and help them form connections with their family and prepare for their lives after incarceration.

The YWCA supports efforts that are designed to interrupt the cycle of intergenerational criminal justice involvement, poverty, and addiction – efforts that support those that are already incarcerated have a better chance at a successful re-entry and those efforts to reduce the number of men and women from even entering the system. We believe it is critical to enact programs like the Family Sentencing Alternative Program (FSAP) that reduce the collateral consequences of parental incarceration on children, families, and the community. We also believe that a focus on mothers is especially warranted as 84% of incarcerated mothers had at least one child living with them before incarceration and children of incarcerated mothers are 2.5 times more likely to also become incarcerated in their lifetime than if their father is incarcerated.

We support HB 3380A and its efforts to allow additional qualified parents to be reunited with their families while receiving intensive supervision and community-based treatment. The YWCA is especially supportive of addressing the loophole from the 2015 law that inadvertently excluded expectant mothers from eligibility. The importance of providing newborns a chance to bond with their mother cannot be understated for both the child and the mother.

We know that children with incarcerated parents experience levels of trauma that have a permanent effect on them. Please support HB 3380A and its efforts to reduce the number of children impacted by their parents' involvement in the public safety and criminal justice systems.

Thank you,



Susan Stoltenberg
CEO, YWCA of Greater Portland

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