

February 5, 2020

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon Legislature

Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger and Members of the Committee,

The Family Preservation Project that was available to my daughter and her children while she was in Coffee Creek Women's Facility was the best thing the state of Oregon could have provided for the children's well-being. It helped to maintain the bond the children had with their mother prior to her being convicted and placed in the facility for a potential of 5 years. This allowed her and her children to heal from the emotional distress they felt from being apart on a daily basis.

I believe this program also helps the individual who is incarcerated, whether it be the father or mother, as they learn to cope with their children's feelings about them being incarcerated and how to help their children overcome the situation that they have placed them in. It brings them back to the reality of what should matter most, their children's well-being.

For the most part it is the children who suffer the most in this situation and giving any release to the suffering is in the long run, better for the child. The family unit is always the support each child needs, and however they can get that from their mother and father will make them better individuals. They will get support from other family members while their parent is incarcerated, but it is not the same. As they grow older they will not be so angry, distrustful and this helps with their emotional growth.

I know the program helped my grandchildren to be able to spend time with their mother during the time she was in the facility. They were able to cope with the bad situation, in a more positive way.

Please support this program and HB 4131.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Ritter