

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

February 9, 2021

Janelle Bynum, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Noble and Power, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing today to express support for HB 2912, which reauthorizes funding for The Re*Membering Project – a pilot program that provides civil legal assistance to people incarcerated in Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF) to address legal issues that might become or already are barriers to their successful reentry into the community.

The YWCA is one of the nation's oldest and largest women's organizations, with 2.6 million members across 300 local associations. The YWCA of Greater Portland has been serving Oregonians for over 110 years, with the core mission of eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, dignity and freedom for all. Our work includes the Family Preservation Project (FPP), an effort for women incarcerated at CCCF that promotes individual and system-level change to reduce the collateral consequences of parental incarceration on children, families, and the community.

FPP has worked for nearly two decades to enhance family connections on a broad scale. Our work includes addressing the non-legal barriers to communication with children and families, DHS and family-law case management, caregiver support, and individualized work promoting self-efficacy, relationship-building, and effective parenting. The important work done by The Re*Membering Project to support the legal aspects of successful reentry complements (but does not duplicate) the services provided by FPP. Both programs are critical resources for families impacted by incarceration.

Women have distinct paths to prison that too often involve trauma and abuse, unique challenges while incarcerated, and reentry experiences that differ greatly from men. For instance, the number-one predictor of successful reentry for women is a strong, positive relationship with their children and family and a significant number of the women at Coffee Creek were the primary caregivers for their children. As a result, it is abundantly clear that there is a compelling need to promote those relationships through programs like FPP and The Re*Membering Project. Having worked alongside OJRC and their staff for years, we applaud their work and urge you to support HB 2912.

Thank you,

Jessica Katz
Family Preservation Project, Director

eliminating
empowering
ywca
of greater portland

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