



Date: February 20, 2023  
To: House Committee on Judiciary  
From: Oregon NOW  
Re: Support for HB 2731

Chair Kroph, Vice Chairs Anderson and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

**Oregon National Organization for Women (Oregon NOW)** is submitting this letter in support of HB 2731 which directs the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission to establish, in collaboration with the Department of Corrections, a Family Preservation Project (FPP) pilot program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (this Bill was requested by the YWCA which currently runs the program for the Department of Corrections).

Oregon NOW has in past years proudly testified in support of the Family Preservation Project and its bills have historically been priority bills for us. The FPP is not only highly successful in preventing recidivism among its participants, it also provides much needed support for their children. It saves the state money by lowering recidivism rates and supporting family placements that are less expensive to the state and generally better for the children of incarcerated parents. Most women in prison are mothers, and many are the primary caretakers of their children. Their removal from their children when they go to prison is traumatic. The FPP helps to keep the bonding of parent and child intact and has proven positive outcomes. The program is a key component in preventing a revolving door. The Legislature should continue to approve funding for the FPP, and provide the program some much needed stability by providing funding through 2031 as requested in HB 2731.

Oregon NOW's priority issues include:

- Economic justice: Most women going to prison are living on the edge financially. When people on the edge go to prison that usually means that a primary provider of family income is no longer contributing financially to the household. It often means that their children become dependent on the state for their very survival. The FPP helps to provide stability to these children as well as enrichment activities.
- Ending domestic violence against women: An overwhelming number of women in prison have been subjected to domestic violence. The services offered by the FPP, including individualized transition planning, pre-release planning and post-release support help to break the cycle.

The Family Preservation Project (FPP) is proven to greatly reduce recidivism rates and the children who are participants in the project have exhibited much better outcomes than children of incarcerated mothers who do not participate in the program. The reduced recidivism rate alone pays for the program, and if one considers the likely improved lifetime outcomes for the child participants, including the reduced likelihood that they will be incarcerated in the future, the relatively small investment (HB 2731 calls for \$650,000 per biennium) is a small price to pay for the proven rewards. Oregon NOW urges the passage of HB 2731.

Respectfully,

Kim Critelli  
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Legislative Co-Chair, Oregon NOW

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