

LISA REYNOLDS, MD
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
District 34



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Good morning, Chair Prozanski and Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee.

My name is Lisa Reynolds, state representative for Oregon HD 34.

I am a member of the House Committee on the Judiciary, and I'm grateful to be here in support of SB 1070.

More importantly, I am a pediatrician, and I'm obsessed with making Oregon the best state in which to grow up. I'm particularly focused on a child's first 3 years of life.

For it is these years - zero to three – that can largely determine the trajectory of a child - even into adulthood. It's why I'm working to reduce child poverty, because the *toxic stress* from housing insecurity and hunger or domestic violence can interfere with the important engagement and bonding that takes place in those *crucial* first years.

So back to the measure at hand - and how I look at this through *my* lens.

Approximately 84% of incarcerated women are mothers, the majority of which have two or more children. In total, 68,000 kids in Oregon have had an incarcerated parent.

So when we talk about providing just and fair sentencing, I am interested in the aspect that preserves and protects families– *Oregon* families.

For the financially-minded folks in the room, we know that when one mom is incarcerated and she has two children placed in state care, we are spending \$100,000 per year in that those three humans. As an aside, I can't help but wonder about giving even one half or one third of those resources to the same family, but upstream.

I'd like to give judges a pathway to more accurately determine sentence lengths, to consider reduced or alternative sentencing and to keep families together.

I worry a lot about the babies and children of women who are incarcerated, and I was honored to carry HB 2535 – which passed unanimously off of the house floor last week – to establish a doula program for pregnant incarcerated mothers. I have also helped shepherd a bill to Ways and

Means that codifies funding for the family preservation program which supports mothers and their children while the mothers are incarcerated at Coffee Creek.

And, through that bill, I've had the privilege of working with some of the incredible women that you are hearing from today, several of whom have families and know the traumas that occur when a child is unnecessarily and unjustly separated from an incarcerated parent for years on end.

In 2017, this legislature made a promise to these women's children and to all children of incarcerated parents when it passed the *Oregon Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents*. This bill of rights promised these kids that they would be heard and respected by decision-makers when decisions are made about the child *and* their parents.

SB 1070 provides an opportunity for this legislature to actualize this Bill of Rights and keep parents with their children sooner.

I thank you for your time.