

TESTIMONY TEMPLATE/EXAMPLE

TO: Ways & Means Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee
DATE: May 3, 2023
RE: SUPPORT THE FAMILY PRESERVATION PROJECT/HB 2731

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Please fund the Family Preservation Project/HB 2731. The bill creates in statute and funds the Family Preservation Project (FPP), which mitigates the impacts of parental incarceration on kids in Oregon that have a parent in prison. The program also secures almost a dollar-for-dollar match from private funds AND saves the state at least that much in other costs related to incarcerated moms and their children.

FPP has impacted the lives of thousands of Oregon mothers and children, providing services to help incarcerated women and their children overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system.

I support FPP, because I've seen the incredible work they have done. I worked with FPP as a social work intern last year, and I was so impressed at the longevity of the work, the strong sense of community among the family who are alumni of the program, and the clear impact of this work on their lives. FPP interrupts cycle of intergenerational criminal justice involvement, poverty and addiction and helps decrease risk of recidivism.

Lastly, funding FPP helps to actualize the Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents, which has been advocated for by some rockstar young people I've had the privilege to work with. . It is critical that we as a community and as a state recognize the needs and prioritize the rights of children of incarcerated parents from the time of their parent's arrest through incarceration. We must do better.

Funding FPP ensures fewer children are placed in foster care, incarcerated moms are less likely to go back to prison, and children of participants are exhibiting successful outcomes academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to Oregon. Please support HB 2731 so that these critical supports and services do not go away.

Sincerely,

Caryn Shebowich
Portland, OR