

TO: Ways & Means Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee  
DATE: May 5, 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 help facilitate a music program at Columbia River Correctional Institution in Portland, and I have seen firsthand how important it is to support families impacted by incarceration. Children need their parents and need community support when a parent is incarcerated. Parents need community support while incarcerated and upon release. The Family Preservation Project provides that essential support. We need more people doing the work they do. The more we as a society can build on this kind of community based connection and care, the more we can reduce our reliance on prisons and incarceration to solve problems.

Lastly, funding FPP helps to actualize the Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents. 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 and release. We must do better. For all of our sakes.

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,

Nate Query  
Portland, Oregon