

TO: Ways & Means Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee  
DATE: May 4, 2023  
RE: SUPPORT THE FAMILY PRESERVATION PROJECT/**HB 2731**

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

I am writing to ask you to please fund the Family Preservation Project/HB 2731. This bill funds the Family Preservation Project (FPP), which mitigates the impacts of parental incarceration on kids in Oregon. The program also secures a nearly dollar-for-dollar match from private funds AND saves the state at least that much in other costs related to incarcerated mothers 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 as a mother and a midwife in Oregon, I see up close the importance of supporting mothers and children and the impact that has for the rest of their lives. Moms are more likely to be custodial parents and take on a bulk of the parenting responsibilities. So, we need programs that support them specifically, like FPP.

Parental incarceration impacts childrens' mental health, social behavior, and educational outcomes. FPP interrupts the cycle of intergenerational criminal justice involvement, poverty and addiction and helps decrease risk of recidivism. Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to be incarcerated, especially when it is the mom.

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. 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,

Nicole Bendotoff  
Portland, OR