

Submitter: Michelle Zellers

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure: SB5506

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 as a social work student and therapist in Oregon, I understand the long-term mental health impacts that incarceration of parents has on children and on society. Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to be incarcerated, and that number climbs when it is mom that is incarcerated. FPP is a compassionate program aimed at healing and breaking cycles of intergenerational trauma. This benefits not just the families involved, but also our society as a whole.

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,

Michelle Zellers
Portland, Oregon