



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2555
HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 19, 2025**

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice-Chair Wallan, and members of the Committee,

OCDLA strongly supports HB 2555 because it would keep families together and reduce the amount of time kids spend in foster care.

OCDLA's 1,200 members statewide include public defense providers, private bar attorneys, investigators, experts, and law students. Our attorneys represent Oregon's children and parents in juvenile dependency proceedings, youth in juvenile delinquency proceedings, adults in criminal proceedings at the trial and appellate level, as well as civil commitment proceedings throughout the state of Oregon. Our mission is championing justice, promoting individual rights, and supporting the legal defense community through education and advocacy.

The Family Sentencing Alternative Program has documented successes. The program helps to interrupt cycles of incarceration, poverty, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Participants in FSAP can receive vocational training, go through parental life skills classes, and receive other support that will keep families healthy and together.

Given the fact that FSAP has documented successes, helps to interrupt the cycle of incarceration and ACEs, and with the understanding that grandparents are sometimes the primary caregiver in certain family structures (though not the legal guardian), it makes sense to extend FSAP to primary caregivers.

HB 2555 will make a few important changes to the program to ensure it can continue making our communities safe and keeping Oregon's families together:

- 1.) Eliminate the sunset clause and make FSAP a permanent program;
- 2.) Enable those who receive a downward departure to probation to receive services through FSAP;
- 3.) Allow for true primary caretakers of children (e.g. a grandmother or grandfather is the one taking care of the child, but is not the legal guardian) to receive services through this program;
- 4.) Ensure that program participants can be connected to services that are best suited to their needs.

Support HB 2555 and FSAP reduces our reliance on expensive prisons and instead invests in treatment, parenting and other resources

Mae Lee Browning
Legislative Director
Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association