

February 10, 2020

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon Legislature

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger and Members of the Committee,

My name is Casey Hough.

I am writing you today to ask for your support of HB 4131, which creates in statute and funds the Family Preservation Project (FPP). FPP is a program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility for incarcerated women, their children and their caregivers. The program has impacted the lives of thousands of Oregon mothers and children, providing services to help incarcerated women overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system. Sufficient, stable funding will ensure these families get the support they need.

I have seen first-hand the difference this program can make in the lives of my friends. One who was incarcerated at Coffee Creek did not get to participate in the program, and now that she is out she does not have close relationships with any of her sons. Another friend, however, did get to participate, and her relationships with both of her children are vibrant. I have heard one of these children link this directly to their ability to continue regular contact through FPP.

This program is critical for Oregon, because every day that this program goes unfunded, real families suffer. Over 68,000 children in Oregon have an incarcerated parent and 80% of women who are incarcerated are mothers. This is program provides an immediate need that these women and children will not find elsewhere. Funding this program is a matter of urgency for thousands of Oregonians.

If we truly believe that strong families are the key to a strong country and to breaking cycles of incarceration, how can we possibly afford not to invest in this program?

Please support HB 4131 and help make sure this program can continue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Casey Hough
Junction City, OR 97448

February 10, 2020

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon Legislature

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elaine Dorety. My daughter was at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility for four years. She was in the Family Preservation Project program for her last three years.

It was so amazing to see how her and her daughter were able to remain bonded through this program. She has now been out for almost five years, and both of them still work to help keep the program going. I feel it says a lot about a program that these women continue to try to save it when they are not even incarcerated anymore. All of the women and kids are still close to each other and stay in touch.

My granddaughter is now 11 years old and wants to help other kids who have mommies in prison. All because of FPP. It is important that all kiddos get these chances. That all mothers get the chance to stay bonded with their kids. They all become family to each other and that is always a good thing.

Thank you. Please support HB 4131.

Best,
Elaine Dorety

February 10, 2020

To State Representatives of Oregon:

Please support HB 4131.

My name is Sophia Frias, I am ten years old and I participated in the FPP program. It was a great opportunity to be able to spend more time with my mom and even on holidays that were made special in our visits. It was also a great place to find and meet friends who are going through the same things me and by siblings were. One of my favorite memories was a family celebration where my dad, Tia Blue and little baby cousin joined me and my siblings to spend quality time where we laughed, ate pizza and even had pumpkin pie. I got up with my mom and did Karaoke too. Please support HB4131 to give other children the chance to see their mom like I had.

My Name is Roxanna Frias, I am 13 years old and I absolutely love FPP. I really enjoyed the bonds I built with my mom, kids, other moms, Mrs. Heather and Mrs. Katz. I really like the time that was taken to talk to me about what it would look like when my mom comes home, having a plan for when time gets tough and a plan on how to address my concerns and feelings, I felt heard. I really enjoyed the Halloween visits because I would be able to help and be a role model to the other kids. Please support FPP and HB 4131, because this program has a major effect on kids and their moms outcomes for life during and after prison.

My name is Necho Frias, I am 15 and I have been apart of this program since I was 11. I think FPP is a great program. I think it allows kids to see that their mom is healing and getting better, and I personally got to watch my mom do so many things to grow as a mom. The visits were a great way to connect with my mom. I noticed how she still looked out for me in everything I was doing, and it would make me feel good. One of my favorite visits was our Thanksgiving visit, because all my family would be together, and they could see what I saw in my mom and how well she was doing. Please support the Family Preservation Project in HB 4131, because it brings everyone closer and shows that change can happen and does happen.

Thank you!!!

Sincerely,

Sophia Frias
Roxanna Frias
Necho Frias

February 10, 2020

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon Legislature

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lanetta Garner

I am writing you today to ask for your support of HB 4131, which creates in statute and funds the Family Preservation Project (FPP). FPP is a program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility for incarcerated women, their children and their caregivers. The program has impacted the lives of thousands of Oregon mothers and children, providing services to help incarcerated women overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system. Sufficient, stable funding will ensure these families get the support they need.

I was a participant of the FPP Program from 2012 to 2014. I had a baby girl in 2009 (who is now 10) during my incarceration. I didn't really get to experience being a mother to her because of the circumstances. I was lost without my children but was blessed to become part of the FPP program. The women of the program were all so supporting or in other words at times "we were all we had". This was more than a program to me, but rather a family. And for once it didn't matter where I came from but most important who I was becoming.

Before I was accepted into the FPP program I was lost. Within getting involved in the program I was slowly able to deal with and face the trauma in my life and was able to gain support from some of the most amazing women that I have ever come to meet. Not only did they help me to see my life in another perspective but they also taught me that I am a great mom who took the wrong path in life. I was able to rebuild broken relationships with family members through calls twice a week. I was able to hold my children and give them the love that only a mother could provide. I was able to make lifelong friendships and bonds that can never be broken. For me being able to see my kids, tell them I love them, hug and kiss them, see them smile and play was all I needed to carry me on to the next day. Not only did the program provide support to the mothers and the children of the program but also to the caregivers of our children. This program provides a safe place to us women and our children, where we can learn and grow together. This program teaches us our worthiness, responsibility, and most important pushes us to be more than we may think of ourselves.

I was one of the few mothers who only got to see my children on those visit days through the program. Or got to make phone calls to them when I had no other outside sources or write as many letters as I wanted throughout the week due to my children being split up in 3 different households.

FPP is more than JUST a program it is one of the few programs in the women's prison that has meaning and a purpose. Without this program I believe it makes the reunification process with family so much

harder. I wish there was a way to serve a greater population of incarcerated mothers, and giving up the little we have will be devastating not only to the mothers but the children as well.

This program is critical to Oregon, because:

- FPP provides cost savings across a broad range of public services. From reducing foster care and corrections needs, to the long-term costs saved in social services by interrupting the cycle of incarceration, poverty, and trauma, this program's impact reaches beyond just lives of the mothers and children served.
- Children whose parents are incarcerated experience trauma, shame and stigma. FPP provides a unique model for helping children cope with these experiences. FPP changes the lives of children with an incarcerated parent by providing support they do not receive anywhere else.
- Every day that this program goes unfunded, real families suffer. Over 68,000 children in Oregon have an incarcerated parent and 80% of women who are incarcerated are mothers. This is program provides an immediate need that these women and children will not find elsewhere. Funding this program is a matter of urgency for thousands of Oregonians.

Please support HB 4131 and help make sure this program can continue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lanetta Garner
Portland, OR 97230

February 10, 2020
Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon Legislature

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger and Members of the Committee,

I was incarcerated from 2006-2009 and I participated in the Evenstart program from 2007-2009. Evenstart is now the Family Preservation Project. Being in the program allowed me to have more quality time with my two kids who were 3 and 5 at the time. Those of us in the program were able to spend time with our kids in a more friendly environment than the prison visiting area. There were games, toys, learning activities, crafts, and much more. My youngest who is 15 now still remembers visiting me there, she says it didn't seem like a prison to her. The atmosphere helped calm her down and focus on spending time with me.

The mother-child bond is so important, often times women are the main caregiver for her children. The Family Preservation Project and the Family Resource Center help repair and strengthen the bonds of incarcerated mothers and their children. FPP provided parenting classes that helped me parent even while I was incarcerated in part by giving me the tools to communicate more effectively with my children's caregivers. Choosing to be a strong part of my kids' life while behind bars helped them to see that I loved them and wanted to be a part of their lives.

I ended up in prison because of crimes that I committed while doing meth. I really hurt my family by going to prison for 3 years. My family suffered way more than I did by my prison sentence. Programs like FPP and FRC are more for the child than for the incarcerated mother. Kids need their parents regardless of circumstances. I can say with intention that any woman that gets into a program like FPP and FRC is serious about their children and has plans on being a mother upon release. Mothers are getting released and immediately are responsible for her kids again. We need programs like FPP and FRC to rebuild and strengthen those relationships. These programs are preparing women for success. These programs are a big part in lowering the recidivism rate as well as helping to break the cycle of addiction in so many families.

Thank you for your time and consideration and please keep this program funded.

Thank you,

Misty Folmsbee
Milwaukie OR, 97222

February 10, 2020

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon Legislature

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rhiannon Miller

I am writing you today to ask for your support of HB 4131, which creates and funds the Family Preservation Project (FPP). FPP is a program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility for incarcerated women, their children and their caregivers. The program has impacted the lives of thousands of Oregon mothers and children, providing services to help incarcerated women overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system. Sufficient, stable funding will ensure these families get the support they need.

I was a participant of the FPP FRC at Coffee Creek in 2018. I participated in a parents of teenagers support group that helped to talk to other mothers in a safe place. My girls opened up to me about stuff they couldn't talk to their father about. I hadn't hugged my daughters in 2 years. We spoke on the phone, wrote letters and video visited but it was so important for us to hug and interact in person. The FRC helped me file for parenting time.

Today I have a strong supportive relationship with my girls now. I'm 3 1/2 years clean and sober. I am a Certified Recovery Mentor and CADC working in a detox helping addicts navigate early recovery.

This program is critical for Oregon, because it allows children to connect with their mother and feel supported in hard times:

A - FPP helps mothers take ownership of their lives and responsibility for their children upon re-entry. It is a proven model for reducing recidivism, strengthening families and our communities as well.

B - FPP provides cost savings across a broad range of public services. From reducing foster care and corrections needs, to the long-term costs saved in social services by interrupting the cycle of incarceration, poverty, and trauma, this program's impact reaches beyond just lives of the mothers and children served.

C - Children whose parents are incarcerated experience trauma, shame and stigma. FPP provides a unique model for helping children cope with these experiences. FPP changes the lives of children with an incarcerated parent by providing support they do not receive anywhere else.

D - Every day that this program goes unfunded, real families suffer. Over 68,000 children in Oregon have an incarcerated parent and 80% of women who are incarcerated are mothers. This program provides an immediate need that these women and children will not find elsewhere. Funding this program is a matter of urgency for thousands of Oregonians.

Please support HB 4131 and help make sure this program can continue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Rhiannon Miller
Milwaukie, OR 97222

February 10, 2020

Rep. Tawna Sanchez, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon Legislature

Dear Chair Sanchez, Vice Chairs Bynum and Sprenger and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sophia Montoya

I am writing you today to ask for your support of HB 4131, which creates in statute and funds the Family Preservation Project. FPP is a program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility for incarcerated women, children and their caregivers. The program has impacted the lives of thousands of Oregon mothers and children, providing services to help incarcerated women overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system. Sufficient, stable funding will ensure these families get the support they need.

Me and my mother were a part of FPP for 3 years. If it weren't for FPP then me and my mom would not have the relationship we have today. FPP was so special because in the visiting room there are many rules, you had to stay in your seat, mom couldn't go get snacks with you, couldn't take you to the bathroom, if you were over 8 you couldn't sit on your mothers lap. FPP allowed you to do these things with a trauma informed space, the chow hall was very isolated. FPP was very different than normal visits in the visiting room, this was a two hour period with a meal and you were able to lay outside and read book under the tables, you can just be more of yourself there.

I am writing today because I want this for families in there now and families there in the future, this program makes such a difference on kids and mom relationships. It allows them to connect on a different level then you would on normal visitation. FPP provides cost savings across a broad range of public services. From reducing foster care and corrections needs, to the long-term costs by interrupting the cycle of incarceration, poverty and trauma, this programs impact reaches beyond just lives of the mothers and children served.

Everyday that this program goes unfunded, real families suffer. Over 68,000 children in Oregon have an incarcerated parent an 80% of women who are incarcerated are mothers. This program provides an immediate need that these women and children will not find elsewhere. Funding this program is a matter of urgency or thousands of Oregonians.

Please support HB 4131 and help make sure the program can continue

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,
Sophia Montoya