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**Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon**

February 5, 2020

Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs Bynum and Sprenger, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

As the state's leading political voice for reproductive health care, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon urges strong support for HB 4131. We stand with our reproductive justice partners who have long proclaimed that the fight for justice and equity does not end with having the right to make reproductive and sexual health decisions; that fight must include advocating for people to have the power and resources necessary to raise and support their families in safe environments and healthy communities, with equitable access to justice, education, and opportunity.

The number of women imprisoned in the Oregon Department of Corrections has nearly tripled over the past 20 years despite the fact that women are not committing more frequent or serious crimes.<sup>1</sup> One driver of these increased rates of incarceration is changes in sentencing laws, related to certain drug and property crimes, which have disproportionately impacted women of color.<sup>2</sup> What's more, justice-involved women have often experienced childhood victimization, family violence, unhealthy relationships, unsafe housing, and are of low socioeconomic status.<sup>3</sup> Eighty percent of women who are incarcerated are mothers. In Oregon, 20,000 children currently have at least one parent that has been incarcerated, a top 10 Adverse Childhood Experience with lifelong effects. Children with an incarcerated mother are more likely to be placed in foster care and are more likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime. Connecting those children with their mothers and engaging families in therapeutic support reduces their trauma and reduces those likelihoods.

House Bill 4131 would codify and fund a vital program, the Family Preservation Project, which is a proven model for strengthening families and communities by providing support not otherwise available, including arranging therapeutic visitations for families; intensive transition planning; caregiver support; biopsychosocial assessments and interventions; weekly classes and support groups; and other resources. Investing \$650,000 per biennium into the Family Preservation Project will help incarcerated women and their children overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, these investments will help mitigate the costs that would otherwise be incurred by state agencies, such as DHS, OHA, and ODE . We respectfully urge your support for HB 4131.

Sincerely,

Emily McLain  
Executive Director  
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/crime/2017/02/16/oregon-faces-skyrocketing-female-prison-population/98012786/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.