

February 5, 2020

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

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

My name is Crystal Magana. 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 resource center from 2012-2016. The resource center and volunteers helped me have regular weekly phone calls with my daughter. They were on the phone with me to help coach me to have a healthy, beneficial conversation with my daughter. If it weren't for this, I wouldn't have been able to establish and get to the place I am today with my daughter. They provided me weekly writing letter opportunities and any information that my daughter brought up they researched and printed out so I could be of support and encouragement to my daughter from prison. They really bridged that gap for me.

Prior to FPP I had no communication with my daughter because DHS either would drop the ball or said it wasn't helpful to my daughter. Because of FPP and they're practices, DHS allowed me to call and interact with my daughter. These phone calls and letters helped my daughter know that I love her and never forgot about her. You see the cost of phone calls, writing supplies and stamps are so expensive and when you make an average of \$24 a month, it makes it hard to buy hygiene products or stay in communication with your child.

The support services that FPP provides are holistic in approach and helped me overcome questions and obstacles of things I needed upon parole after 16 ½ years. They connected me with a program that met me at the gate and provided me with clothes and hygiene. FPP looked up where I was paroling to and researched things like how I get my driver's license. They role-played conversations with me that I would be having with my P.O. They also provided the "Speaker Series" where different folks came in and provide information about DHS, programming in the community to ease fears about release, job and further education programs and how to access them upon release. FPP was the only program that truly helped me be able to release successfully into the community. FPP maintains relationships with all the released mothers to continue to support and encourage them once they have released, so you aren't alone. They help a mother overcome whatever barriers and obstacles that is preventing her from being a healthy mother and member of the community outside of prison.

Today my relationship with my daughter is good. We are able to spend holidays together and I am able to do things with her like go out for lunch or buy her gifts.

Today I am off paper. I am a member of Local 29 IronWorkers. I live life on life's terms. I try to participate in everything that will help keep FPP going and accessible to all incarcerated mothers, and anything that will make a positive change at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility.

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 programs 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.

I am writing today to let you know how crucial this program is to incarcerated mothers and their kiddos. There is no other program at the prison that does what FPP does or has the empathy, passion, or capability to do so. I'm hoping that after you read my letter and the letters from other moms you will be moved to vote for HB 4131 to be passed.

Thank you for your Consideration.

Sincerely,

Crystal Magana