

Dear Chief Sponsors and the Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation,

I am a midwife and a mother in Portland, OR. I am urging you to please vote yes on SB720 to support funding for The Family Preservation Project so that the mothers can stay connected to their children while incarcerated.

As a midwife, I spend a lot of time with mothers and babies in the first 6 weeks of life. Through my own experience as a mother of 2 and by supporting women so intimately during the postpartum period, I know first hand how important that time is for bonding and creating a lifelong connection between the mother/baby dyad. And, how important the mother child bond remains throughout a lifetime. It is heart wrenching to imagine mother's being separated from their babies and children with no real way of staying in regular communication with them or seeing them on a regular basis. Honestly, it is inhumane to not have the means of protecting and fostering these relationships.

The Family Preservation Project helps mothers and children maintain a relationship during incarceration by providing space, time, resources, and materials for mothers to meet with their children and for mothers to learn how to re-enter society as successful parents. This project supports confidence, purpose, empathy, skill acquisition and health. Maintaining these relationship is one of the best ways to ensure success for post-incarcerated women. Another goal is to reduce the chances of children of incarcerated people ending up in the criminal justice system. The only way to break the cycle is by providing adequate support and education to these families.

Again, I urge you to vote yes on SB720 to solidify funding for The Family Preservation Project and support families staying connected during a most challenging time.

Thank you for your support,  
Nicole Bendotoff, CPM, LDM  
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