



March 1, 2021

Oregon Senate
Salem, Oregon 97301
Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) strongly supports the passage of SB 720 which will provide for the Family Preservation Project (FPP) at Coffee Creek Correctional Institution. The Family Preservation Project has been in existence since 2010, originally in partnership with Portland Community College, and more recently with the YWCA of Portland. Bills to fund this valuable project have stalled repeatedly in the Ways and Means committee in the chaotic legislative environment of recent years. The legislature must not fail to fund it in 2021.

The FPP is a highly successful program giving emotional and educational support to children of incarcerated parents, helping to strengthen the bonds between incarcerated mothers and their children, teaching parenting and life skills, and providing resources to the mothers to assist in a successful transition from prison to the community.

Since the FPP's inception, the mothers and children who have participated in it have fared far better than those who have not had the benefit of the program. The recidivism rate for the mother's is lower than for their counterparts who did not participate, and the children overall do much better than do children of incarcerated parents who have not had the benefit of the FPP.

No fiscal impact statement is available for the 2021 version of this bill, but in 2019 the cost was estimated at approximately \$600,000 per year. Even without including the long-term societal benefits of families that function better because of this program or accounting for the comprehensive costs of the incarceration of each prisoner, the program will pay for itself if about 15 inmates per year do not re-offend after release. Our families are worth the investment.

Respectfully,

Christine Chin Ryan
President, Oregon NOW

H. Rebecca Callison
Legislative Chair, Oregon NOW