

Submitter: Summer Morton
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Ways & Means Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee

DATE: May 3, 2023

RE: SUPPORT THE FAMILY PRESERVATION PROJECT/HB 2731

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Committee,

Please fund the Family Preservation Project/HB 2731. The bill creates in statute and funds the Family Preservation Project (FPP), which mitigates the impacts of parental incarceration on kids in Oregon that have a parent in prison. The program also secures almost a dollar-for-dollar match from private funds AND saves the state at least that much in other costs related to incarcerated moms and their children.

FPP has impacted the lives of thousands of Oregon mothers and children, providing services to help incarcerated women and their children overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system.

I support FPP, because I was incarcerated from November 2, 2020 to May 24, 2022. If it wasn't for FPP I would have not been able to talk to my kids. They paid for all the calls they helped with school supplies and even helped with getting me a phone and stuff I would need when I was released. They also paid for me to become a Peer Wellness Specialist and I now help other mothers getting out of prison with resources and help them accomplishing their goals after release. If I ever have any questions or concerns I am able to contact FPP and they take the time to listen and help in any way they can.

Lastly, funding FPP helps to actualize the Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents. It is critical that we as a community and as a state recognize the needs and prioritize the rights of children of incarcerated parents from the time of their parent's arrest through incarceration. We must do better.

Funding FPP ensures fewer children are placed in foster care, incarcerated moms are less likely to go back to prison, and children of participants are exhibiting successful outcomes academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to Oregon. Please support HB 2731 so that these critical supports and services do not go away.

Sincerely,

Summer Morton
Eugene, OR