

TO: 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 saw the power of FPP - of mothers after incarceration holding their children. I've watched the magic unfold when power is put into the hands of these mothers who have been criminalized for survival - they are FPP. The love FPP pours into mothers and children both currently and formerly incarcerated is one that heals deep personal and systemic wounds.

FPP holds at highest regard an understanding that moms are more likely to be the custodial parent, that the impact of perinatal incarceration impacts mental, social and educational health and outcomes. FPP interrupts the cycle of intergenerational criminal justice involvement, poverty and addiction and helps decrease risk of recidivism.

Lastly, there are many associated costs to the state when we do not intervene for infants born to mothers in custody or for children of incarcerated parents. Having a parent in prison significantly impacts a child's mental health, social behavior, and educational outcomes. There are no established safety nets to catch this often invisible, but growing population of children in our state. 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,

Madz Wright, Portland Oregon