

Submitter: Akhila Nekkanti
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2555
Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice-Chair Wallan, and members of the Committee,

The Family Sentencing Alternative Program (FSAP) reduces recidivism and keeps families together.

Offering an opportunity for families to stay together even when one or more of the caregivers has done harm, allows children to witness and experience growth and accountability. It allows adults the compassionate opportunity to acknowledge what harm they may have done and make the intentional choice to repair and make amends. So many of us could have benefited from being able to watch our caregivers learn, grow, and be accountable to their wrongdoings. I am so grateful to have been able to experience this - I watched my caregiver turn into the person they wanted to be, the parent they wanted to be, all because they were met with nonjudgment and given the opportunity to learn. Harm cannot be undone, but repair is always possible if people are treated with compassion and nonjudgment.

Created by the Legislature in 2015 through the passage of HB 3503, FSAP diverts pregnant mothers, recent parents, and primary caregivers away from a term of incarceration and into strict community supervision. In the community supervision program, program participants can receive vocational training, go through parental life skills classes, and receive other support that will keep families healthy and together.

FSAP operates in five counties, and it has demonstrated important success over the last decade. HB 2555 will make a few important changes to the program to ensure it can continue making our communities safe and keeping Oregon's families together:

- * Eliminate the sunset clause and make FSAP a permanent program;
- * Enable those who receive a downward departure to probation to receive services through FSAP;
- * Allow for true primary caretakers of children (e.g. a grandmother or grandfather is the one taking care of the child, but is not the legal guardian) to receive services through this program;
- * Ensure that program participants can be connected to services that are best suited to their needs.

I urge your support for the Family Sentencing Alternative (HB 2555).