

Submitter: Judith Armatta
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2555
Support for Family Sentencing Alternative Program (HB 2555)

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.

If this program had existed when my nephew got thrown into the Criminal Justice System at age 20, he wouldn't have spent the next ten years in and out of jail and prison. And he wouldn't have been murdered at age 33, leaving four children without a father. With help he might have learned how to parent his first child so he could have made a family as he so desperately wanted. Lacking that help and being sent to prison for a probation violation put him in touch with a criminal element that he reconnected with when he was released and couldn't find a job.

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).