

Submitter: Kindra Richardson
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.

I have been working with justice involved and impacted families for roughly 15 years. In this time, I have seen children most severely impacted by their parent's incarceration, this is due to lack of ability to visit, being moved from home to home, not understanding why or being given age-appropriate information about where their parent is. What I have seen through programs that foster building relationships with co-parents, caregivers and children, is that parents that are bonded to and with their children have a reduced recidivation rate than parents who are not. In the long term, it is more cost effective for the state of Oregon to hub a parent with services and leave the children with the parent, than it costs to incarcerate the parent and pay for foster placement of the children.

There is often a stigmatism that children of incarcerated parents have, and they suffer in silence, let us not continue the cycle of incarceration by placing funds on the front end versus the back in of justice.

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).