

Submitter: Elena Wiesenthal

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.

As a person who volunteers within our overextended foster care system, I support programs that keep families together and provide resources for safe and healthy homes. Kids do better throughout their lives when they are with their families and those families get the support they need.

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).

Sincerely,

Elena Wiesenthal