

Submitter: Brett Harper
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 someone who grew up adopted, feeling different, then shipped off to an abusive boys home and then an abusive boarding school I can tell you that kids and their bonds to their parents are a sacred and very important thing. I can tell you because I've lived the consequences of someone whose mother was murdered when I was 6 mo old by my father and was adopted by family members who abused me then shipped me off to be abused. So I have a complicated relationship with this issue as family doesn't always do whats best and sometimes that are times when kids should be removed from homes with parents who repeatedly abuse drugs, alcohol and then abuse or neglect their kids.

As an advocate I have written two books, called CPS on more than one parents, have had my life threatened for it, my addresses doxed, have been stalked, etc. Here's what I'll say...if the parent is willing to submit and get help and sexual abuse or physical abuse isn't an issue in the home, then I support this bill and a path for parents to rehabilitate themselves.

HOWEVER most of the time when you lawmakers get together you leave giant holes in your legislation, sometimes on purpose. So I think it explicitly said in the bill that there are no exceptions for sex abuse or repeated physical abuse of a child while on a substance and if such is found to be true and evidentiary that parent should not be given this opportunity to rehab. Thank you for your time. -Brett Harper

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,

Brett William Harper