

TRAVIS NELSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 44
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Testimony in Support of HB 2555

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Chotzen, Vice-Chair Wallan, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

For the record, my name is Travis Nelson, and I'm the state representative for House District 44 – N and NE Portland. I am here as the chief sponsor and strong supporter for HB 2555 because I believe that public safety is not just about law enforcement. It's about keeping families together, strengthening communities, and ensuring that parents get the support they need to care for their children.

In 2015, the Legislature recognized the value of keeping families together and passed HB 3503 almost unanimously. This bill established Oregon's Family Sentencing Alternative Pilot Program within the Department of Corrections. This program diverts pregnant mothers, recent mothers, fathers, and legal guardians away from a term of incarceration and into a sentence of intensive community supervision for some crimes. Supervision can include parenting classes, drug and alcohol treatment, and other services designed to help program participants be the best parents they can to their children.

As of now, the program currently operates in five counties: Marion, Jackson, Multnomah, Washington, and Columbia. It has been successful in reducing relapse in criminal behavior amongst participants and keeping mothers and guardians connected with their families.

The problem is, this bill was enacted with a ten-year sunset clause. This sunset will arrive at the conclusion of the legislative session. Over the last ten years, we have learned what we can do to make this program more effective, and it has proven itself. A sunset is no longer needed.

HB 2555 does away with this clause and establishes the Family Sentencing Alternative Program as a permanent program. It will also increase the number of people who can be considered for participation while also ensuring that primary caretakers who are acting in a parental capacity but who may not be the legal guardian – like aunts, uncles, and grandparents, are able to access services through the program. This bill will also connect program participants to the services that best meet their needs.

I strongly believe that HB 2555 will advance community safety, keep families together, and get parents the support they may need to successfully care for their children while also helping break the cycle of crime. I hope that we can join together and pass this bill with the same bipartisan support it enjoyed when it was first created in 2015.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Travis Nelson".

State Representative Travis Nelson
House District 44, North/NE Portland