



“Support for new beginnings and healthy families.”

April 6th, 2015

To the Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood

I am writing in support of SB 939-1. As a professional working with families & individuals experiencing addiction, trauma in Oregon since 1997. And as the Director of Kinship House a local non-profit exclusively serving the permanency needs of reunifying & adoptive children and families since 1996, (primarily those involved in the child welfare system,) I heartily support the implementation of the programing described within SB 939-1. The services presented are essential in supporting the long term goal of stabilizing both parents & children after incarceration & providing an opportunity for family healing, improving the outcomes for children of incarcerated parents *during* incarceration. The described services address both the re-entry barriers to parents & supports positive outcomes for their children who are the highest risk for becoming our next generation of incarcerated persons.

Research shows that maintaining a healthy family attachment is imperative to the success of all children's cognitive & emotional development, birth through adolescence. Supporting parents with hands on parenting time in a therapeutic setting helps shift the family story to one of healing from a history of trauma, criminal thinking & behaviors that impacted the family prior to incarceration. Without changing this story these children are statistically the most at risks to become a public safety risk entering the both financially & emotionally expensive criminal justice system.

The described attachment informed therapeutic services provided by qualified mental health professionals supports the children in feeling that their parent, unlike in the past, can support them in a healthy & safe family. This may sound over simplistic, but when you are a child in chaotic, traumatic home, security & safety is an unknown experience. **If you have never experienced consistency or a sense of personal safety how can you develop into a healthy adult? How would your life & your expectations of the world be different?** This program supports the impactful solution that a primary caregiver can move forward in their life through repairing the damage of their past choices in honor of themselves & the best interest of their child's future as a family.

It could be argued that the parent's choice has been made, creating the situation, but to ensure a mindful system that supports future success over future failure is more effective in all costs. This program addresses today & tomorrow for children, families & the larger community.

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