



# Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act

H.R. 6129

## BACKGROUND

From 1980 to 2016, the number of women in prisons across the United States increased 742 percent: there are now more than 100,000 incarcerated women, and three-quarters of them are of childbearing age.<sup>1</sup> Women in prison are at a heightened risk for maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity. “Incarcerated pregnant women are more likely to have...risk factors for poor perinatal outcomes than are nonincarcerated pregnant women.”<sup>1</sup> The threat is particularly acute for Black women, who are imprisoned at twice the rate of white women.<sup>2</sup>

The **Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act** provides funding to promote exemplary care for pregnant and postpartum women who are incarcerated. The bill also commissions a comprehensive study to understand the scope of the maternal health crisis among incarcerated women and to make recommendations to prevent maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity in American prisons and jails. Finally, the bill ties federal funding for state and local prisons and jails to prohibitions on the use of restraints for incarcerated women while they are pregnant to end the practice of shackling.

## BILL SUMMARY

The **Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act** will:

1. Use financial incentives for all state and local prisons and jails **to end the practice of shackling pregnant women.**
2. Provide funding for federal, state, and local prisons and jails to establish programs for pregnant and postpartum women in their facilities, including access to support for **doulas and other perinatal health workers, counseling, reentry assistance, maternal-infant bonding opportunities, and diversionary programs to prevent incarceration for pregnant and postpartum women.**
3. Commission a **comprehensive study on maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among incarcerated women**, with a particular focus on racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes.
4. Study the **negative health implications of Medicaid coverage termination** for incarcerated mothers.

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<sup>1</sup> Sufirin, Beal, Clarke, Jones, & Mosher: [Pregnancy Outcomes in US Prisons, 2016-2017](#)

<sup>2</sup> Sufirin, Beal, Clarke, Jones, & Mosher: [Pregnancy Outcomes in US Prisons, 2016-2017](#)

## COSPONSORS

The **Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act** is led by Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley. The bill is cosponsored by Representatives Lauren Underwood, Alma S. Adams, Terri Sewell, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Mary Gay Scanlon, Gwen Moore, Wm. Lacy Clay, Ro Khanna, Karen Bass, and Al Lawson.

## ENDORSEMENTS

The **Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act** is endorsed by more than 50 organizations, including the:

- Black Mamas Matter Alliance
- Black Women's Health Imperative
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- Ancient Song Doula Services
- Mamatoto Village Inc
- National Perinatal Task Force
- Commonsense Childbirth
- Families USA
- Every Mother Counts
- National Birth Equity Collaborative
- First Focus Campaign for Children
- MomsRising
- American Public Health Association
- American College of Physicians
- American College of Nurse-Midwives
- Sésé Doula Services
- Mom Congress
- NARAL Pro-Choice America
- National WIC Association
- American Association of Birth Centers
- Lamaze International
- APS Foundation of America, Inc
- African American Breastfeeding Network
- Society for Public Health Education
- AllianceChicago
- Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
- National Association of Professional and Peer Lactation Supporters of Color (NAPPLSC)
- Healing Hands Community Doula Project
- HealthConnect One
- Atlanta Doula Collective, and more.

## CONTACT

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