

## Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act

*Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) & Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ)*

### 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>2</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 people who are incarcerated. The bill also commissions a comprehensive study to understand the scope of the maternal health crisis among incarcerated people 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 pregnant people to end the practice of shackling.

### JUSTICE FOR INCARCERATED MOMS ACT

The Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act will:

- Use financial incentives for all state and local prisons and jails **to end the practice of shackling pregnant people.**
- 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 people.**
- Commission a **comprehensive study on maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity among incarcerated people**, with a particular focus on racial and ethnic disparities in maternal health outcomes.

The Justice for Incarcerated Moms Act is endorsed by more than 180 organizations, listed [here](#).

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.