A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Correctional Services – Pregnancy and Postpartum Support
(Prevention of Forced Infant Separation Act)

FOR the purpose of requiring the Division of Correction to allow a certain pregnant woman and a certain woman who recently gave birth to transfer to the prerelease unit for women for a certain time period; establishing the Healthy Start Bonding Program to facilitate strong bonds between incarcerated women and their children; requiring the Division to allow liberal visitation between certain individuals and certain children under certain circumstances; and generally relating to pregnancy and postpartum support for incarcerated women and their children.

BY adding to
Article – Correctional Services

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Correctional Services

SUBTITLE 9. PREGNANCY AND POSTPARTUM SUPPORT.

3–901.

(A) THE DIVISION SHALL ALLOW A PREGNANT WOMAN CLASSIFIED TO BE IN PRERELEASE STATUS TO RELOCATE TO THE PRERELEASE UNIT FOR WOMEN THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF HER PREGNANCY.
(B) THE DIVISION SHALL ALLOW AN INMATE WHO IS CLASSIFIED TO BE IN PRERELEASE STATUS AND RECENTLY GAVE BIRTH AND HER CHILD TO RESIDE IN THE PRERELEASE UNIT FOR WOMEN FOR UP TO 1 YEAR FOLLOWING THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD.

3–902.

(A) THERE IS A HEALTHY START BONDING PROGRAM.

(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO FACILITATE STRONG BONDS BETWEEN INCARCERATED WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN.

(C) THE DIVISION SHALL DEVELOP THE PROGRAM IN CONSULTATION WITH PROFESSIONALS WITH EXPERTISE RELATING TO MATERNAL–CHILD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

(D) THE PROGRAM SHALL BE OFFERED AT THE PRERELEASE UNIT FOR WOMEN AND THE MARYLAND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN.

3–903.

(A) THE DIVISION SHALL ALLOW THE FATHER OR SECONDARY CARETAKER OF A CHILD RESIDING AT THE PRERELEASE UNIT FOR WOMEN LIBERAL VISITATION WITH THE CHILD IF THE VISITATION IS OTHERWISE LEGALLY ALLOWED.

(B) THE DIVISION SHALL ALLOW AN INMATE AT THE MARYLAND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN LIBERAL VISITATION WITH HER CHILD.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2022.