

HOUSE BILL 191

E5
HB 523/23 – JUD

(PRE-FILED)

4r1415
CF SB 71

By: **Delegate Mireku-North**

Requested: November 1, 2023

Introduced and read first time: January 10, 2024

Assigned to: Judiciary

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

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

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Division of Correction to allow a certain pregnant woman
5 and a certain woman who recently gave birth to transfer to the prerelease unit for
6 women for a certain time period; establishing the Healthy Start Bonding Program to
7 facilitate strong bonds between incarcerated women and their children; requiring
8 the Division to allow liberal visitation between certain individuals and certain
9 children under certain circumstances; making this Act contingent on the
10 establishment of the prerelease unit for women; and generally relating to pregnancy
11 and postpartum support for incarcerated women and their children.

12 BY adding to

13 Article – Correctional Services

14 Section 3–901 through 3–903 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 9. Pregnancy
15 and Postpartum Support”

16 Annotated Code of Maryland

17 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

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

20 **Article – Correctional Services**

21 **SUBTITLE 9. PREGNANCY AND POSTPARTUM SUPPORT.**

22 **3–901.**

23 **(A) THE DIVISION SHALL ALLOW A PREGNANT WOMAN CLASSIFIED TO BE IN**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 PRERELEASE STATUS TO RELOCATE TO THE PRERELEASE UNIT FOR WOMEN
2 THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF HER PREGNANCY.

3 (B) THE DIVISION SHALL ALLOW AN INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL WHO IS
4 CLASSIFIED TO BE IN PRERELEASE STATUS AND RECENTLY GAVE BIRTH AND HER
5 CHILD TO RESIDE IN THE PRERELEASE UNIT FOR WOMEN FOR UP TO 1 YEAR
6 FOLLOWING THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD.

7 **3-902.**

8 (A) THERE IS A HEALTHY START BONDING PROGRAM.

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

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

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

16 **3-903.**

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

20 (B) THE DIVISION SHALL ALLOW AN INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL AT THE
21 MARYLAND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION FOR WOMEN LIBERAL VISITATION WITH
22 HER CHILD.

23 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

24 (a) Section 1 of this Act is contingent on the establishment of a prerelease unit for
25 women within the Division of Correction.

26 (b) The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services shall notify the
27 Department of Legislative Services within 5 days after a date for the commencement of
28 operations of a prerelease unit for women is established.

29 (c) Once the notice is received by the Department of Legislative Services, Section
30 1 of this Act shall take effect on the date the notice is received by the Department of
31 Legislative Services in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

1 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED That, subject to Section 2 of this
2 Act, this Act shall take effect October 1, 2024.