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Judiciary Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Luke Clippinger, Chair

Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair

Fellow Members of the Judiciary Committee

**Re:** Correctional Services - Pregnant Incarcerated Individuals - Substance Abuse Assessment and Treatment

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I am pleased to reintroduce H.B. 235 formerly introduced as H.B. 524; Pregnant Incarcerated Continuity of Care Act. The purpose of this bill is to ensure a pregnant incarcerated individual is screened for substance use disorder at the time of intake. Incarcerated women are more likely to suffer from drug addiction and abuse. According to the NIH, drug use has been proven to complicate pregnancy including, “fetal growth restriction, placental abruption, preterm labor, or even fetal death.” Women who abruptly stop using drugs such as opioids, can suffer from withdrawal symptoms such as “severe nausea, muscle aches, diarrhea, fever, dehydration, and insomnia.” The aforementioned calamities can be a result of drug abuse or a lack of medical treatment. Every person should be afforded the opportunity to receive adequate health care while pregnant.

If passed, this bill will provide a few necessary measures to reduce the afflictions pregnant incarcerated individuals face. If an incarcerated person is found to have: (1) a positive pregnancy test and, (2) scores positive on the substance use disorder screening, they will be immediately referred to a behavioral health care provider. Further, if a pregnant incarcerated individual receives medication or treatment for opioid use disorder prior to incarceration and desires to continue treatment while incarcerated, the correctional unit shall ensure the individual receives treatment without a break in care.

Please join me in standing up for health access especially for those most vulnerable in our system, and I ask for your **favorable** report on House Bill 235.

Sincerely,

*Wanika B. Fisher, Esq*

Delegate Wanika B. Fisher, Esq.