



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB 71 Correctional Services – Pregnancy and Postpartum Support Prevention of Forced Infant Separation Act

TO: Senator Will Smith, Jr. Chair and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Karen “Candy” Clark,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland Criminal Justice Lead
DATE: February 7, 2024

The state-wide Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) asks for a favorable vote for **SB 71 – Correctional Services- Pregnancy and Postpartum Support**. This bill upholds one of our Unitarian Universalist basic faith principles: to employ the use of compassion, equity, and justice with others. Incarcerated people who give birth in prison need the opportunity to bond with their child. Sadly, it was only a few years ago Maryland passed a bill that ended the practice of requiring incarcerated prisoners to be shackled during birth.

Past prison regulations have limited time between the imprisoned parent and the babies they just gave birth to. This bill provides a way for people who are pregnant when they enter prison and people who give birth in prison to spend more time with their baby, by moving them to a Women’s Reentry Center. Here they will attend a program—developed by professionals—dedicated to building strong bonds between the Parents and their babies. During a year-long stay, the Imprisoned Parent (and their babies) would go through Parental and Child Health Trainings. The imprisoned parent’s partner and other family would have visitations, and other experiences to build strong bonds between the family.

This program is contingent on the establishment of the Women’s Reentry Center which has been approved by the legislature. The desire for this bill to pass should place more pressure to move towards a completion of the Center. Please put more effort to help make that happen. The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry asks for your support for SB 71.

In appreciation of your service,

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