



## TESTIMONY FOR HB0592

### Task Force to Study Forced Infant Separation From Incarcerated Individuals

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Mireku-North

**Committee:** Judiciary

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0592 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

In the State of Maryland, pregnant individuals who give birth while incarcerated are required to return to their correctional facility as soon as the individual is discharged from the hospital<sup>1</sup>. For a standard vaginal delivery, this is generally 1 to 2 days after giving birth. This means that most incarcerated parents have less than 48 hours with their newborns before the baby is separated and placed with an appropriate caregiver or enters the foster care system.

What does this do to the child, and are we putting that child on a path to incarceration? What does it do to the mother, especially in terms of recidivism? It seems like there is a better way to deal with this situation.

This bill, if enacted, would establish a task force to study the problem and make recommendations to the General Assembly by December 31, 2027, on methods to reduce forced infant separation.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.