

The Honorable  
PA State Senator  
State Capitol Address  
(find on <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/>)

RE: Senate Bill 1074 Anti-Shackling Pregnant Prisoners

Dear Senator XXXX:

I am requesting your support of SB 1074 against shackling pregnant women during childbirth. Such practices are inhumane and should not be permitted. The bill was voted out of the Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously on January 26 and now needs to go to the floor of the Senate.

Unbelievably, women still have been shackled in restraints by wrists and ankles even when giving birth. Escape seems exceedingly improbable, particularly when security officers are present. This archaic procedure not only risks the lives of the women giving birth but of the infants that are being born.

The practice is condemned by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The Federal Bureau of Prisons and the U.S. Marshalls Service banned shackling in 2008. In addition, last year the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals stated that shackling women during labor to be, under most situations, a violation of the Eighth Amendment against cruel and unusual punishment.

SB 1074 has the support of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Prison System, the Pennsylvania Prison Society and Justice & Mercy, Inc. as well as numerous other organizations.

This Act affirms the rights of women who give birth as well as our children.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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