



Reporting on Incarceration Pregnancy and Postpartum Outcomes Act

Across the United States, prisons and jails admit at least 1,200 pregnant women each year. Yet, states still lack consistent, standardized data on pregnancy outcomes and the provision of prenatal and postpartum care in custodial settings. National data largely capture only basic outcome counts and miss critical details on complications, access, delays in care, and continuity, while existing evidence points to serious gaps that limit states' ability to assess care quality or prevent harm.

What the Data Are Missing and Why It Matters

- **We don't track what actually happens during pregnancy in custody.** Most systems only report basic numbers, like how many people are pregnant or give birth, but they don't track whether someone got care on time, faced delays, or had complications along the way.
- **There is clear evidence that care is often delayed or inadequate.** Reports and firsthand accounts show that some pregnant women are denied or delayed medical attention, miss basic prenatal services, or are left without proper support during labor and delivery.
- **Without better tracking, states cannot fix these problems or prevent harm.** If no one is collecting detailed, consistent information, it becomes nearly impossible to identify patterns, improve care, or hold systems accountable when something goes wrong.

How the Reporting on Incarceration Pregnancy and Postpartum Outcomes Act Helps

- **Identifies where care is falling short.** With consistent, detailed data, policymakers can see where systems are falling short and make targeted improvements instead of relying on guesswork.
- **Reduces preventable harm to mothers and infants.** By improving oversight and accountability, the bill reduces the likelihood of missed warning signs, untreated complications, and unsafe birth conditions.
- **Creates real accountability.** Independent review and public reporting ensure that facilities are not evaluating themselves, increasing transparency and trust.

States are Already Taking Action

- Ohio has introduced legislation (House Bill 542) to require statewide data collection on pregnancy in prisons and jails, aiming to better understand care and outcomes.
- The Reporting on Incarceration Pregnancy and Postpartum Outcomes Act, developed by Reason Foundation, builds on Ohio HB542 by establishing a consistent set of standards so that data is comparable across jurisdictions.

Bottom line: *Without consistent, detailed data on pregnancy care in custody, states are operating in the dark—standardized tracking is a practical, low-cost step to identify gaps, improve care, and prevent avoidable harm to mothers and infants.*

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