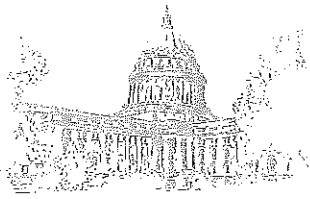


File #17-523



STATE SENATOR
LaTonya Johnson

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

6TH DISTRICT

September 11, 2017

Supervisor Willie Johnson
Chair, Committee on Judiciary, Safety, and General Services
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 North 9th Street, RM 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Chairman Johnson,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write to support the implementation of Milwaukee County's proposed resolution regarding the shackling of pregnant and postpartum persons in a Milwaukee County correctional facility. This resolution will benefit both pregnant women and their babies, and the general public.

This resolution would change the laws as to how representatives of the Milwaukee County correctional facilities, including the Jail, House of Correction, and Juvenile Justice Center, interact with incarcerated pregnant or postpartum women. It would make it so that representatives may not restrain a person known to be pregnant while being transported, during labor, or postpartum. It will also make it so that representatives may not place a person known to be pregnant in solitary confinement for any punitive purpose. In order to have these laws enforced, it is stated within the resolution that all staff members who may encounter a pregnant or postpartum person at any Milwaukee County correctional facility must receive training on these requirements each year.

Since 2011, there have been at least 40 women in Wisconsin that have been shackled while giving birth, according to a recent lawsuit. This includes cases in which a woman was shackled for the entirety of her 21 hours of labor, and another where a correctional officer prevented medical staff from removing a patient's belly-chain, making it incredibly difficult for the medical professionals to administer an epidural and other necessary medical care.

If enacted, this resolution would help medical professionals do their job without unnecessary interference, improving care and positive birth outcomes. Additionally, this policy would save taxpayer dollars by reducing future litigation costs to the County and create savings for Medicaid as the number of costly medical interventions decreases.

This resolution should be something that we can all get behind--it allows for better treatment of our inmates, allows medical professionals to do their jobs more effectively, and saves taxpayer dollars. For these reasons, I encourage the Judiciary, Safety, and General Services committee to move forward with this resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LaTonya Johnson", written over a horizontal line.

LaTonya Johnson
Wisconsin State Senator
6th Senate District