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**REASONS TO SUPPORT
THE ANTI-SHACKLING BILL (H 7182, S 2268)**

For the following reasons we strongly support **H 7182 and S 2268** which limits the use of restraints on incarcerated women during transportation to and from court proceedings in their third trimester.

Using restraints during pregnancy puts the health and lives of women and babies at risk.

- Handcuffs and ankle shackles can prevent a pregnant woman from breaking a fall if she trips or loses her balance and impede her ability to protect her stomach if she is jostled around in a prison van driving quickly to the hospital. Restraints can harm a fetus and increase the likelihood of women losing their balance.
- Shackling cannot be justified as a measure necessary to prevent escape: women cannot run with any significant level of speed during their third trimester.

Restricting the use of restraints will not jeopardize the safety of correctional or medical staff.

- The vast majority of female prisoners are non-violent offenders who pose a low security risk—particularly during the third trimester when mobility is limited.
- Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia, including Rhode Island, restrict the use of restraints on pregnant inmates and those who have recently delivered in prison and health care settings. Washington and Hawaii explicitly address court transport in their laws, and others nationwide are recognizing the need to do the same.

National and international groups oppose shackling pregnant inmates.

- The nation’s leading experts in maternal, fetal and child health care, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), have clearly stated their opposition to the practice of shackling. According to ACOG, shackling is “demeaning and unnecessary.”
- The American Correctional Association’s policy prohibits the use of restraint during labor and delivery. It is also their policy to refrain from using any form of restraint that can do harm to the mother or fetus at any time prior to labor.
- International organizations such as the United Nations’ Human Rights Committee and the Committee Against Torture, as well as Amnesty International, have recommended an end to shackling women during pregnancy and postpartum recovery.

We urge you to support H 7182 and S 2268, a critical step toward ensuring the health and safety of pregnant women in Rhode Island.