

February 27, 2023

Rep. Jason Kropf, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Wallan and Anderson, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Kila Pervish and I want to tell you my story in hopes that it helps you to understand why HB 2535 is so important.

I am the proud mother of 3 children, now ages 7, 2 and 1. In 2015, I was sentenced to 36 months at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. I was 6 months pregnant at the time.

It took a while to get my first medical appointment and a few more weeks for my ultrasound. At the ultrasound, the technician was concerned about the size of my placenta and said something about having a lot of amniotic fluid. I was supposed to be monitored weekly for my calorie intake, as well as Vitamin D and Iron levels, but I didn't receive any additional food or vitamins. I wasn't actually informed about any of that until later.

My experience with the medical staff was not good. I felt like I was bothering them and they treated me like I was being dramatic. I know that I committed a crime, but I was a first time mom and didn't know a lot about what was normal and what wasn't.

At 34 weeks, I woke up uncomfortable and in pain. I had been reading my, "What to expect when expecting book," and it said Braxton Hicks contractions are common so I thought that was what I was experiencing. And because of the way I had been treated, I was afraid to say anything anyway. I didn't want to be embarrassed and told that I was being dramatic.

At breakfast, I talked to another expecting mom who had children and she urged me to get to medical immediately. I didn't want to. She went to the officer, explained the situation and he called medical. Once there, I was told I wasn't in labor. However, another nurse had been timing my contractions and by then they were 3-5 minutes apart. They called the hospital and they said to bring me immediately.

I was taken out to transport where I was shackled and belly chained.

I kept asking the officer on duty if the prison had gotten in touch with my caregiver. I was told that they probably wouldn't keep me at the hospital because I didn't seem like I was in real labor, so no.

At the hospital, I was at dilated 6.5 centimeters. The officer finally contacted the prison about my support person. They said my person wasn't on my list. I firmly demanded that they get in touch with the pregnancy advocate. They did and my caregiver was finally contacted.

I was in labor for 12 hours, 8 of which I did alone

At 12:27 am on January 13th I delivered a health 6.4 oz baby boy. 2 hours post-partum my caregiver was sent away.

On January 14th at about 4 pm I was medically able to be released from the hospital.

I had been preparing myself and knew I had to say goodbye. I put my baby in the little bed thing and went to use the bathroom, not knowing that when I came out the office had pushed him to the hallway and asked the nurse to take him because they didn't want it to be a big emotional transition.

I was then shackled and cuffed again and walked down to the transport vehicle. Back at the prison, the medical supplies I was given to support myself after having a vaginal birth were taken from me. I was strip searched and sent off to the infirmary.

This could have and should have been different. Please pass HB 2535.

Sincerely,
Shakila Pervish
Portland, Oregon