



Date: April 4, 2023  
To: Senate Committee on Healthcare  
From: Oregon NOW  
Re: Support for HB 2535 A

Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and Members of the Senate Committee on Healthcare:

The Oregon Chapter of the National Organization for Women (Oregon NOW) strongly urges the passage of HB 2535 A. Advancing Reproductive Justice is one of NOW's core goals. This Bill falls squarely within that objective.

HB 2535 A would require the Department of Corrections to establish a doula program within Coffee Creek, prohibit the shackling of pregnant adults during labor, delivery and postpartum period in hospital, and restricts the type of searches permitted of a person in custody following childbirth. These improvements to the treatment of pregnant persons will have the long term effect of forging a closer parent-child bond and provide healthier outcomes for both the parent and the child.

The doula program as set forth in HB 2535 A will greatly facilitate in achieving safe and healthy pregnancies and childbirths, better outcomes for both the parent and infant by providing for pregnancy and parenting education, emotional and physical support, accommodation for breast feeding and providing breast milk to the infant.

*"The [Minnesota Prison Doula Project](#) has ascertained that both the pregnancies and the babies of incarcerated parents are healthier than those who do not participate in the program. Having the opportunity to be cared for by midwives and doulas helps set the participants up for a birth experience that will be more satisfying overall. This pre-birth, birth and postpartum support can help positive feelings carry over into positive behavior after giving birth, setting inmates up for success, more good behavior, a connection with their children and a desire to remain out of prison once released." Sharon Muza, BS, CD/BDT(DONA), LCCE, FACCE, CLE, [Advocacy at Work: Doulas Working with Incarcerated Pregnant People](#), February 21, 2018.*

Shackling pregnant people during labor, delivery and postpartum is totally unnecessary and cruel. A person is an extremely low flight risk during childbirth. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) standards specifically state that the use of restraints on pregnant incarcerated people compromises health care and is inhumane.

Cavity searches of people who have just given birth are also unnecessary and inhumane.

The measures outlined in HB 2535 A have been successfully incorporated in other states' corrections facilities with positive outcomes. Oregon NOW strongly urges this legislature to make Oregon the next state to do so.

Respectfully,

Kim Critelli  
President, Oregon NOW  
Legislative Co-Chair, Oregon NOW

Nancy Cook  
Legislative Co-Chair, Oregon NOW