

Good afternoon Legislators, members of the Committee and all those in attendance:

My name is Michael Ferreira, I am a resident of West Hartford and I am currently enrolled as a graduate student at the University of Connecticut in pursuit of obtaining a Masters Degree in Social Work. I would also like to familiarize myself with the legislative process to strengthen my path as a Community Organizer.

I am here in support of Bill Number 5288 "An Act Concerning Children of Incarcerated Women."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures in March 2009, imprisonment disrupts positive nurturing relationships between many parents - particularly mothers – and their children. Research suggests that intervening in the lives of incarcerated parents and their children to preserve and strengthen positive family connections can yield positive societal benefits in the form of reduced recidivism, less intergenerational criminal justice system involvement and promotion of healthy child development. According to Creasia Finney Hairston, author of "Prisoners and Their Families", studies indicate that families are important to prisoners and to the achievement of major social goals, including the prevention of re-offending and delinquency. By allowing inmate mothers serving a sentence of 18 months or less the opportunity to raise their children within their formative months could provide the tools necessary to break the cycle and provide them the interaction needed to better their developmental growth and well being. Bonding between a mother and child during the first few months following child birth can be argued as the strongest single predictor of the child's future emotional wellbeing. Studies indicate that when a mother-child bond is disrupted, these children

often develop severe problems related to a disorganized attachment pattern and other deviant behaviors.

Washington Corrections Center for Women currently has a program called Residential Parenting Program (RPP) which began in 1999 and currently is still effectively in place. According to an article in Children's Voice entitled "Babies Behind Bars Nurseries for Incarcerated Mothers and Their Children" published in July-August of 2010, it was determined that the per inmate cost of the program is the same as other minimum security offenders, costing the State approximately \$123.00 per day, per inmate. The Department of Social and Health Services pays for toys, books and food. This is the same funds the families would qualify for outside of prison, so there's no additional cost to taxpayers. The State of Connecticut Department of Corrections Scope of Health Care Services Clause within their Administrative Directive already provides prenatal and postpartum health care through the UConn Health Center Correctional Managed Health Care Program (CMHC) at John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington. In conclusion, not only would the enactment of this bill be a benefit to the inmate, but also to the State of Connecticut, the Judicial System and Tax payers.