

Dear _____

As your constituent, I'm writing to ask you to support the health and wellbeing of women and mothers in our criminal justice system.

A118/S3126 take multiple steps to protect the health of the thousands of incarcerated women, especially pregnant women, throughout our state. Since 1980, the number of incarcerated women in New York's prisons has increased by nearly 400 percent. An estimated four percent of women are pregnant when they become incarcerated.

The bill provides for common-sense services such as access to prenatal vitamins, and includes gynecological services in the definition of routine medical care for inmates at correctional facilities.

It's also crucial that all medical staff in state and local correctional facilities be trained on how to provide appropriate and respectful care to women, especially for survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence.

Finally, women who give birth while incarcerated should be able to have a support person of her choice present in the delivery room, and should be made aware of all of her options including nursery programs that are available to her and her child. Nursery programs have been shown to significantly decrease recidivism rates for mothers as well as to improve early childhood outcomes for their children.

Women and new mothers in our justice system deserve access to holistic health services as a human right.

I ask that you support this effort and speak with your colleagues to protect access to essential health services for women in our justice system.

Respectfully,
