

CHAPTER 2012-41

Senate Bill No. 524

An act relating to the restraint of incarcerated pregnant women; providing a short title; defining terms; prohibiting use of restraints on a prisoner known to be pregnant during labor, delivery, and postpartum recovery unless a corrections official makes an individualized determination that the prisoner presents an extraordinary circumstance requiring restraints; authorizing an officer to apply restraints after consulting with medical staff; requiring that any restraint applied must be done in the least restrictive manner necessary; requiring the corrections official to make written findings as to the extraordinary circumstance requiring restraints; restricting the use of certain restraints during the third trimester of pregnancy unless there are significant security concerns documented by the department or correctional institution; requiring that the findings be kept on file by the department or correctional institution for at least 5 years; authorizing any woman who is restrained in violation of the act to file a grievance within a specified period; providing that these remedies do not prevent a woman harmed through the use of restraints from filing a complaint under federal or state law; directing the Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice to adopt rules; requiring correctional institutions to inform female prisoners of the rules upon admission, include the policies and practices in the prisoner handbook, and post the policies and practices in the correctional institution; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, restraining a pregnant prisoner can pose undue health risks and increase the potential for physical harm to the woman and her pregnancy, and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of female prisoners in this state are nonviolent offenders, and

WHEREAS, the impact of such harm to a pregnant woman can negatively affect her pregnancy, and

WHEREAS, freedom from physical restraints is especially critical during labor, delivery, and postpartum recovery after delivery as women often need to move around during labor and recovery, including moving their legs as part of the birthing process, and

WHEREAS, restraints on a pregnant woman can interfere with the medical staff's ability to appropriately assist in childbirth or to conduct sudden emergency procedures, and

WHEREAS, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the United States Marshals Service, the American Correctional Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Public Health Association all oppose restraining women during labor, delivery, and postpartum

recovery because it is unnecessary and dangerous to a woman's health and well-being, NOW, THEREFORE

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Shackling of incarcerated pregnant women.—

(1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the “Healthy Pregnancies for Incarcerated Women Act.”

(2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Correctional institution” means any facility under the authority of the department or the Department of Juvenile Justice, a county or municipal detention facility, or a detention facility operated by a private entity.

(b) “Corrections official” means the official who is responsible for oversight of a correctional institution, or his or her designee.

(c) “Department” means the Department of Corrections.

(d) “Extraordinary circumstance” means a substantial flight risk or some other extraordinary medical or security circumstance that dictates restraints be used to ensure the safety and security of the prisoner, the staff of the correctional institution or medical facility, other prisoners, or the public.

(e) “Labor” means the period of time before a birth during which contractions are of sufficient frequency, intensity, and duration to bring about effacement and progressive dilation of the cervix.

(f) “Postpartum recovery” means, as determined by her physician, the period immediately following delivery, including the recovery period when a woman is in the hospital or infirmary following birth, up to 24 hours after delivery unless the physician after consultation with the department or correctional institution recommends a longer period of time.

(g) “Prisoner” means any person incarcerated or detained in any correctional institution who is accused of, convicted of, sentenced for, or adjudicated delinquent for a violation of criminal law or the terms and conditions of parole, probation, community control, pretrial release, or a diversionary program. For purposes of this section, the term includes any woman detained under the immigration laws of the United States at any correctional institution.

(h) “Restraints” means any physical restraint or mechanical device used to control the movement of a prisoner's body or limbs, including, but not limited to, flex cuffs, soft restraints, hard metal handcuffs, a black box, chubb cuffs, leg irons, belly chains, a security or tether chain, or a convex shield.

(3) RESTRAINT OF PRISONERS.—

(a) Restraints may not be used on a prisoner who is known to be pregnant during labor, delivery, and postpartum recovery, unless the corrections official makes an individualized determination that the prisoner presents an extraordinary circumstance, except that:

1. The physician may request that restraints not be used for documentable medical purposes. The correctional officer, correctional institution employee, or other officer accompanying the pregnant prisoner may consult with the medical staff; however, if the officer determines there is an extraordinary public safety risk, the officer is authorized to apply restraints as limited by subparagraph 2.

2. Under no circumstances shall leg, ankle, or waist restraints be used on any pregnant prisoner who is in labor or delivery.

(b) If restraints are used on a pregnant prisoner pursuant to paragraph (a):

1. The type of restraint applied and the application of the restraint must be done in the least restrictive manner necessary; and

2. The corrections official shall make written findings within 10 days after the use of restraints as to the extraordinary circumstance that dictated the use of the restraints. These findings shall be kept on file by the department or correctional institution for at least 5 years.

(c) During the third trimester of pregnancy or when requested by the physician treating a pregnant prisoner, unless there are significant documentable security reasons noted by the department or correctional institution to the contrary that would threaten the safety of the prisoner, the unborn child, or the public in general:

1. Leg, ankle, and waist restraints may not be used; and

2. If wrist restraints are used, they must be applied in the front so the pregnant prisoner is able to protect herself in the event of a forward fall.

(d) In addition to the specific requirements of paragraphs (a)-(c), any restraint of a prisoner who is known to be pregnant must be done in the least restrictive manner necessary in order to mitigate the possibility of adverse clinical consequences.

(4) ENFORCEMENT.—

(a) Notwithstanding any relief or claims afforded by federal or state law, any prisoner who is restrained in violation of this section may file a grievance with the correctional institution, and be granted a 45-day extension if requested in writing pursuant to rules promulgated by the correctional institution.

(b) This section does not prevent a woman harmed through the use of restraints under this section from filing a complaint under any other relevant provision of federal or state law.

(5) NOTICE TO PRISONERS.—

(a) By September 1, 2012, the department and the Department of Juvenile Justice shall adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida Statutes, to administer this section.

(b) Each correctional institution shall inform female prisoners of the rules developed pursuant to paragraph (a) upon admission to the correctional institution, including the policies and practices in the prisoner handbook, and post the policies and practices in locations in the correctional institution where such notices are commonly posted and will be seen by female prisoners, including common housing areas and medical care facilities.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2012.

Approved by the Governor April 6, 2012.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 6, 2012.