

Task Force on Female Inmates and Their Newborn Children

~~FOR the purpose of requesting the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to develop a comprehensive plan for the care and treatment of female offenders and their children; providing for the plan to be developed in cooperation with certain agencies; providing for the plan to be submitted to the General Assembly by a certain date; and generally relating to a comprehensive plan for female offenders and their children.~~

FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force on Female Inmates and Their Newborn Children; specifying the membership of the Task Force; specifying the purpose and duties of the Task Force; requiring the Task Force to submit certain reports by certain dates under certain circumstances; providing for the staffing of the Task Force; providing for certain meeting notices; and generally relating to the Task Force on Female Inmates and Their Newborn Children.

WHEREAS, The incarceration rates for female offenders is increasing significantly; and

~~WHEREAS, Female offenders are most often the primary caretakers of dependent children; and~~

~~WHEREAS, Pregnant female offenders often give birth while incarcerated in local jails and facilities of the Division of Correction; and~~

~~WHEREAS, These children are among the highest risk of Maryland's youth in infant mortality, birth defects, medical problems and learning disabilities; and~~

~~WHEREAS, A recent survey conducted by the Subcabinet Task Force on Incarcerated Mothers and Dependent Children of the Office for Children, Youth, and Families indicated that there were 1,217 children with mothers incarcerated at Maryland Correctional Institution Women; and~~

~~WHEREAS, For the health, welfare, and stability of future family units, newborns should have greater access to their mothers whenever appropriate; and~~

~~WHEREAS, There are inadequate support services, health care, space, housing, and counseling for incarcerated mothers and their newborns in correctional facilities throughout the State; and~~

~~WHEREAS, There is an increasing need to reduce the length of time spent by dependent children in foster care and other nonrelative placements; and~~

~~WHEREAS, There is a need for local jails and the Division of Correction to develop well coordinated services for female offenders and their dependent children; and~~

~~WHEREAS, The Governor's Committee to Study Sentencing and Correctional Alternatives for Women Convicted of Crime (June 1988) identified this issue as a key to improved correctional programming and as a potential critical service for dependent children; now, therefore, be it~~