

## Reproductive Justice for People Birthing and Parenting in Prison

The United States incarcerates more people than any other nation in the world. The population of incarcerated women, in particular, has increased dramatically: by more than 800% in the last three decades. Most incarcerated women are parents, and a significant number are pregnant during their incarceration. Because of pervasive racial and class bias in the criminal justice system, incarcerated women are disproportionately women of color. Incarcerated women face significant obstacles to reproductive justice, including laws and policies that make it difficult to maintain parental ties to their children, limit access to quality health care, including reproductive health care, and permit mistreatment that jeopardizes their health and their pregnancies. While working to promote the human rights of all people to be treated with care and dignity, and to dramatically reduce incarceration rates, we also seek local and state policy changes that improve the lives of incarcerated people.

### OUR PLATFORM FOR TRANSFORMATION URGES ALL STATES TO:

#### REDUCE INCARCERATION RATES:

- Reform state and local drug policies to reduce the number of people convicted for and incarcerated for substance use and possession.
- Reform sentencing structures to provide alternative sentences for parents, pregnant women, and people convicted of non-violent crimes.
- Create and/or fund community-based treatment programs designed to meet the needs of parents and pregnant women.



*Kimberly Mays was shackled during labor and childbirth while incarcerated at the Washington State Corrections Center for Women.*

*“Instead of being a mother who was about to give birth, I lost all sense of dignity and self-respect. That experience was the most demoralizing event in my entire life.”*



**MAINTAIN FAMILY TIES FOR INCARCERATED PARENTS:**

- Mandate and fund programs that maintain appropriate contact between children and incarcerated parents.
- Reform child welfare laws to ensure appropriate reunification between children and incarcerated parents, including extending or eliminating harsh timelines for parental termination proceedings.

**MANDATE HUMANE AND DIGNIFIED HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE, INCLUDING SPECIFIC PROGRAMS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN.**

- Abolish the use of restraints on pregnant women throughout the Northwest.
- Require appropriate nutrition, responsive and nurturing prenatal and postnatal care, and mandate reporting and monitoring of correctional institutions to ensure compliance.
- Ensure access to contraception, abortion, and information about sexual health.
- Ensure appropriate and responsive health care for transgender people in prisons and jails.

**THROUGH OUR PLATFORM FOR TRANSFORMATION, WE WILL WORK WITH COMMUNITIES TO**

- Share a reproductive justice analysis with communities working for reform of and in the prison system.
- Promote and expand paid positions of leadership for formerly incarcerated people in advocacy groups.
- Create a dialogue that challenges the mainstream view of prisons as places that ensure public safety.
- Promote and expand the involvement of doulas with incarcerated pregnant women.

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YOU CAN JOIN US! Contact us at (206) 486-6440. For a detailed analysis of legal barriers, policy proposals, and the work of community groups promoting reproductive justice for incarcerated people, go to [www.surgereprojustice.org](http://www.surgereprojustice.org).

Surge stands with communities whose bodies, lives, and families have been subject to state and social control. We advance racial and reproductive justice through community engagement, education, and policy advocacy by mobilizing communities.

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*We envision a world where all communities are free from reproductive oppression, racism, and violence.*