

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 608

Short Title: Dignity for Women Who are Incarcerated. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives K. Baker, Clemmons, White, and K. Hall (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 21, 2021

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO PROMOTE THE DIGNITY OF WOMEN WHO ARE INCARCERATED.  
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.(a)** Chapter 15A of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
5 Article to read:

6 "Article 83A.

7 "Dignity for Women Who are Incarcerated Act.

8 **"§ 15A-1360.2. Definitions.**

9 As used in this Article, the following definitions apply:

- 10 (1) Body cavity searches. – The probing of body orifices in search of contraband.  
11 (2) Correctional facility. – Any unit of the State prison system, local confinement  
12 facility, juvenile detention facility, or other entity under the authority of any  
13 State or local law enforcement agency that has the power to detain or restrain  
14 a person under the laws of this State.  
15 (3) Correctional facility employee. – Any person who is employed by a State or  
16 local government agency or unit and who works at or in a correctional facility.  
17 (4) Escape risk. – An incarcerated person who is determined to be at high risk for  
18 escape based on an individualized risk assessment.  
19 (5) Important circumstance. – There has been an individualized determination  
20 that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the female incarcerated  
21 person presents a threat of harming herself, the fetus, or any other person, or  
22 an escape risk that cannot be reasonably contained by other means, including  
23 the use of additional personnel.  
24 (6) Incarcerated person. – Any person incarcerated or detained in any facility who  
25 is accused of, convicted of, sentenced for, or adjudicated delinquent for  
26 violations of criminal law or the terms and conditions of parole, probation,  
27 pretrial release, or a diversionary program.  
28 (7) Menstrual products. – Products that women use during their menstrual cycle.  
29 These include tampons and sanitary napkins.  
30 (8) Postpartum recovery. – The six-week period following delivery, or longer, as  
31 determined by the health care professional responsible for the health and  
32 safety of the female incarcerated person.  
33 (9) Restraints. – Any physical or mechanical device used to restrict or control the  
34 movement of an incarcerated person's body, limbs, or both.



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- 1           (10) Restrictive housing. – Any type of detention that involves removal from  
2 general population and an inability to leave a room or cell for the vast majority  
3 of the day. This term shall not include any of the following:  
4           a. Single cell accommodations in facilities that provide those  
5 accommodations to all incarcerated persons.  
6           b. Single cell accommodations in facilities that provide those  
7 accommodations to all persons of a certain sex or gender.  
8           c. Single cell accommodations provided for medical reasons, except  
9 when pregnancy, alone, is the medical reason for the single cell  
10 accommodations.  
11           d. Single cell accommodations provided when an individualized  
12 determination has been made that there are reasonable grounds to  
13 believe that there exists a threat of harm to the female incarcerated  
14 person or the fetus.  
15           e. Single cell accommodations provided at the request of the incarcerated  
16 person.  
17           (11) State of undress. – A situation when an incarcerated person is partially or fully  
18 naked, either in the shower, toilet areas, a medical examination room, or while  
19 having a body cavity search conducted.

20 **§ 15A-1360.3. Care for female incarcerated persons related to pregnancy and childbirth.**

21           (a) Limitation on Use of Restraints. – Except as otherwise provided in this subsection,  
22 the Department of Public Safety and correctional facility employees shall not apply the following  
23 restraints on a pregnant female incarcerated person during the second and third trimester of  
24 pregnancy, during labor and delivery, and during the six-week postpartum recovery period:

- 25           (1) Leg restraints.  
26           (2) Handcuffs or other wrist restraints.  
27           (3) Restraints connected to other incarcerated persons.  
28           (4) Waist shackles.

29           A female incarcerated person who is in the postpartum recovery period may only be  
30 restrained if a correctional facility employee makes an individualized determination that an  
31 important circumstance exists. In this case, only wrist handcuffs held in front of the female  
32 incarcerated person's body may be used and only when she is ambulatory. The correctional  
33 facility employee ordering use of restraints on any female incarcerated person while in the  
34 postpartum recovery period shall submit a written report to the warden or administrator of the  
35 correctional facility within five days following the use of restraints. The report shall contain the  
36 justification for restraining the female incarcerated person during postpartum recovery.

37           Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit the use of handcuffs or wrist restraints held in front  
38 of the female incarcerated person's body when in transport outside of the correctional facility,  
39 except that these restraints shall not be used in transport when the female incarcerated person is  
40 in labor or is suspected to be in labor.

41           Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit the use of medical restraints by a licensed health  
42 care professional to ensure the medical safety of a pregnant female incarcerated person.

43           (b) Body Cavity Searches. – No correctional facility employee, other than a certified  
44 health care professional, shall conduct body cavity searches of a female incarcerated person who  
45 is pregnant or in the postpartum recovery period unless the correctional facility employee has  
46 probable cause to believe that the female incarcerated person is concealing contraband that  
47 presents a threat of harm to the female incarcerated person, the fetus, or another person. In this  
48 case, the correctional facility employee shall submit a written report to the warden or  
49 administrator of the correctional facility within five days following the body cavity search,  
50 containing the justification for the body cavity search and the presence or absence of any  
51 contraband.

1       (c)     Nutrition. – The Department of Public Safety and the administrator of the correctional  
2 facility shall ensure that pregnant female incarcerated persons are provided sufficient food and  
3 dietary supplements, and are provided access to food at appropriate times of day, as ordered by  
4 a physician, a physician staff member, or a correctional facility nutritionist to meet generally  
5 accepted prenatal nutritional guidelines for pregnant female incarcerated persons. While in the  
6 hospital, pregnant female incarcerated persons and female incarcerated persons in the postpartum  
7 recovery period shall have access to the full range of meal options provided by the hospital to  
8 ensure that each meal meets the female incarcerated person's nutritional needs.

9       (d)     Restrictive Housing. – The Department of Public Safety and the administrator of the  
10 correctional facility shall not place any pregnant female incarcerated person, or any female  
11 incarcerated person who is in the six-week postpartum recovery period, in restrictive housing  
12 unless a correctional facility employee makes an individualized determination that an important  
13 circumstance exists. In this case, the correctional facility employee authorizing the placement of  
14 the female incarcerated person in restrictive housing shall submit a written report to the warden  
15 or administrator of the correctional facility within five days following the transfer. The report  
16 shall contain the justification for confining the female incarcerated person in restrictive housing.

17       (e)     Bed Assignments. – The Department of Public Safety and the administrator of the  
18 correctional facility shall not assign any female incarcerated person who is pregnant or in  
19 postpartum recovery to any bed that is elevated more than 3 feet from the floor of the correctional  
20 facility.

21       (f)     Cost of Care. – While a pregnant female incarcerated person is incarcerated, the  
22 pregnant female incarcerated person shall be provided necessary prenatal, labor, and delivery  
23 care as needed at no cost to the pregnant female incarcerated person.

24       (g)     Reporting. – The warden or administrator of the correctional facility shall compile a  
25 monthly summary of all written reports received pursuant to this section and G.S. 15A-1360.6.  
26 The warden or administrator of the correctional facility shall submit the summary to the Chief  
27 Deputy Secretary of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice.

28 **"§ 15A-1360.4. Postpartum recovery of female incarcerated persons.**

29       (a)     Bonding Period. – Following the delivery of a newborn by a female incarcerated  
30 person, the Department of Public Safety or the administrator of the correctional facility shall  
31 permit the newborn to remain with the female incarcerated person while the female incarcerated  
32 person is in the hospital, unless the medical provider has a reasonable belief that remaining with  
33 the female incarcerated person poses a health or safety risk to the newborn.

34       (b)     Nutritional and Hygiene Products During the Postpartum Period. – During the period  
35 of postpartum recovery, the Department of Public Safety and the administrator of the correctional  
36 facility shall make available the necessary nutritional and hygiene products, including sanitary  
37 napkins, underwear, and hygiene products for the postpartum female incarcerated person. The  
38 products shall be provided at no cost to the female incarcerated person.

39 **"§ 15A-1360.5. Family considerations; placement of female incarcerated person; visitation.**

40       (a)     Placement. – To the greatest extent practicable, after accounting for security and  
41 capacity, the Department of Public Safety shall place a female incarcerated person who is in the  
42 custody of the State prison system and who is the mother of a minor child under the age of 1  
43 within 250 miles of the child's permanent address of record.

44       (b)     Visitation. – The Department of Public Safety shall authorize visitation of  
45 incarcerated persons held in State prisons with low- or minimum-security classifications, who  
46 are parents of a minor child under the age of 1, by the incarcerated person's minor child under  
47 the age of 1. These visitations shall be allowed at least twice per week unless a correctional  
48 facility employee has a reasonable belief that the child may be harmed during visitation. These  
49 visitations shall be allowed by contact visit.

50 **"§ 15A-1360.6. Inspection by correctional facility employees.**

1       (a) Inspections When a Female Incarcerated Person is in the State of Undress. – To the  
2 greatest extent practicable and consistent with safety and order in a correctional facility, there  
3 shall be a limitation on inspections by male correctional facility employees when a female  
4 incarcerated person is in a state of undress. Nothing in this section shall limit the ability of a male  
5 correctional facility employee from conducting inspections when a female incarcerated person  
6 may be in a state of undress if no female correctional facility employees are available within a  
7 reasonable period of time.

8       (b) Documentation Requirement. – If a male correctional facility employee deems it is  
9 appropriate to conduct an inspection or search while a female incarcerated person is in a clear  
10 state of undress in an area such as the shower, the medical examination room, toilet areas, or  
11 while a female incarcerated person is having a body cavity search, the male correctional facility  
12 employee shall submit a written report to the warden or administrator of the correctional facility  
13 within five days following the inspection or search, containing the justification for a male  
14 correctional facility employee to inspect the female incarcerated person while in a state of  
15 undress.

16 **"§ 15A-1360.7. Access to menstrual products.**

17       Access to Menstrual Products. – The Department of Public Safety and the administrator of  
18 the correctional facility shall ensure that sufficient menstrual products are available at the  
19 correctional facility for all female incarcerated persons who have an active menstrual cycle.  
20 Female incarcerated persons who menstruate shall be provided menstrual products as needed at  
21 no cost to the female incarcerated person.

22 **"§ 15A-1360.8. Training and technical assistance.**

23       (a) Correctional Facility Employee Training. – The Department of Public Safety shall  
24 develop, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, Divisions of Public  
25 Health and Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, and shall  
26 provide to all State prison employees who have significant regular contact with pregnant female  
27 incarcerated persons training related to the physical and mental health of pregnant female  
28 incarcerated persons and fetuses, including:

- 29           (1) General care of pregnant women.
- 30           (2) The impact of restraints on pregnant female incarcerated persons and fetuses.
- 31           (3) The impact of being placed in restrictive housing on pregnant female  
32 incarcerated persons.
- 33           (4) The impact of body cavity searches on pregnant female incarcerated persons.

34       Training materials and curricula developed pursuant to this subsection shall be made  
35 available to administrators of local confinement facilities.

36       (b) Educational Programming for Pregnant Female Incarcerated Persons. – The  
37 Department of Public Safety shall develop and provide educational programming to pregnant  
38 female incarcerated persons held in State prisons related to:

- 39           (1) Prenatal care.
- 40           (2) Pregnancy-specific hygiene.
- 41           (3) Parenting skills.
- 42           (4) The impact of alcohol and drugs on the fetus.
- 43           (5) General health of children.

44       Training materials and curricula developed pursuant to this subsection shall be made  
45 available to administrators of local confinement facilities."

46       **SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 143B-702 reads as rewritten:

47 **"§ 143B-702. Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public**  
48 **Safety – rules and regulations.**

49       (a) The Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public  
50 Safety shall adopt rules and regulations related to the conduct, supervision, rights and privileges  
51 of persons in its custody or under its supervision. Such rules and regulations shall be filed with

1 and published by the office of the Attorney General and shall be made available by the Division  
2 for public inspection. The rules and regulations shall include a description of the organization of  
3 the Division. A description or copy of all forms and instructions used by the Division, except  
4 those relating solely to matters of internal management, shall also be filed with the office of the  
5 Attorney General.

6 (b) The rules and regulations adopted under this section shall be subject to the  
7 requirements of Article 83A of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes."

8 **SECTION 1.(c)** Article 10 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes is amended by  
9 adding a new section to read:

10 "**§ 153A-221.2. Treatment of pregnant prisoners; female prisoners.**

11 A local confinement facility established pursuant to this Part shall be subject to the  
12 requirements of Article 83A of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes."

13 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2021.