



S.1524 - Dignity Act (115th Congress)

[Congress.gov Link Update](#)

Title	Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act of 2017 “A bill to improve the treatment of Federal prisoners who are primary caretaker parents, and for other purposes.”
Introduced By	Cory Booker, D-NJ on behalf of Elizabeth Warren, D-MA; Richard Durbin, D-IL; Kamala Harris, D-CA
Co-sponsors	
Bill History	Introduced 7/11/2017.
Committee	Senate Judiciary
Companion Bills	None
Summary of Bill	The Dignity Act establishes procedures to protect the health and safety of incarcerated women and improve children’s visitation with their mothers and fathers. Specifically, the bill mandates that the BOP provide adequate hygiene products and gynecological services; prohibits the shackling and segregation of pregnant women; and encourages increased visitation and improved communication between primary caretaker parents (gender neutral) and their loved ones.
Key Provisions	<p>Section 2 amends 18 U.S.C. § 4050 by adding the following:</p> <p>(b) Prisoner Placement - Authorizes BOP to create office dedicated to Prisoner Placement; Office required to place prisoners with children as close to children as possible.</p> <p>(c) Visitation-Allows for visitation 6 days per week including weekends; requires that visitation be open at least 8 hours; and allows for 5 adult visitors and unlimited children. Also permits physical contact between prisoner and visitor so long as no immediate physical danger posed</p> <p>(d)(1) Segregated Housing - Prohibits pregnant women and new mothers from segregated housing unless danger to self or others (2) Prohibits shackling of pregnant women</p> <p>(e) Parenting Classes - mandates director to provide parenting classes to primary caretakers</p> <p>(f) Trauma - Provides trauma-informed care for all prisoners diagnosed with trauma and trauma-informed training for all officers and employees that interact with prisoners</p> <p>(g) Mentoring - formerly incarcerated (Federal) individuals may enter facilities to mentor current prisoners and prepare them for reentry; Primary caretaker parents and pregnant women cannot be excluded from participation in substance abuse treatment based on their failure to report substance abuse problem to officials prior to incarceration (amends 18 U.S.C. § 3621(e)(7))</p> <p>(h) Ombudsman - Creates Ombudsman position to oversee transportation, strip searches, segregated housing, and civil rights violations</p> <p>(i) Communication - Free phone calls and video conferencing; does not replace physical visits</p> <p>(j) Mandates Director to make feminine and basic hygiene products available in quantity that accounts for the needs to the prisoner and ensure access to</p>

	<p>gynecologist.</p> <p>(k) Officers-prohibits strip searches by officers of opposite sex unless immediate danger presented or no other officer of same sex available; prohibits entrance into opposite sex bathroom unless immediate danger, medical emergency, or no other officer of same sex available. The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 is not affected.</p> <p>Section 3-Establishes an Overnight Visit Pilot Program allowing for overnight visits from family members for eligible primary caretaker i.e. nonviolent prisoners demonstrating good behavior</p>
Related Federal Bills	H.R. 3410 Stop Infant Mortality and Recidivism Reduction Act of 2017 (SIMARRA Act). ¹
Action in States	<p>Massachusetts Primary Caretaker Bill S.770 (see also H.2315) (would grant primary caretaker offenders the right to have the court consider their primary caretaker status prior to sentencing.)²</p> <p>Several States have pending legislation related to the use of solitary confinement for pregnant and post-partum women.³</p>
Related Partner Reports (with hyperlinks)	<p>Vera Institute of Justice (Blog by Tess Domb Sadof 8.10. 2015) Alternatives to incarceration for moms aim to strengthen families</p> <p>#Cut50 (Bill overview; includes call to action and 35 min video of Cory Booker and Elizabeth Warren discussing the need) https://www.cut50.org/dignity</p>
Other Sources and Publications (with hyperlinks)	<p>Prison Fellowship (Training Resource including References) Impact Of Incarceration On Caregivers</p> <p>USA Today⁴ (Video- <i>Orange is the New Black</i> author discusses how incarcerating mothers affects children) Piper Kerman: Locking up mothers creates devastating ripples</p> <p>Rolling Stone (Article by Matt Laslo 7.17.2017) Congress Members Aim to Restore Dignity to Incarcerated Women</p> <p>Huffington Post (Article by Melissa Jeltsen 7.11.2017) https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/cory-booker-and-elizabeth-warren-want-to-treat-women-in-prison-like-human-beings_us_5964cce5e4b005b0fdc84b00</p> <p>Refinery 29 (Article by Elizabeth Kiefer 7.12.2017) Senators Cory Booker & Elizabeth Warren Demand "Dignity" For Women Behind Bars</p> <p>CNN (2 Minute Video of Cory Booker and accompanying article 9.15.2017) Opinions: Female Prisoners Dignity Act</p>
For Actions on criminal justice reform: [link TBA]	

¹ SIMARRA creates pilot program for incarcerated mothers to reside together with children in a separate prison housing unit. For Latest Action: [Click Here](#).

² <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/S770> As of 10/31/17 the last action on Mass S.770 was a new draft (S2170) on 10/2/17.

³ See e.g. [N.Y. AB 1610](#), [NY SB 4795](#), [WI SB 393](#).

⁴ Posted on JRT Website.