



**Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee
February 15, 2018**

HB 787 - Correctional Services - Inmates - Menstrual Hygiene Products

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Support

The American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland (ACLU) supports HB 787, which requires all corrections facilities to develop written policies regarding medical care for pregnant inmates.

In the last 25 years, the number of women and girls caught in the criminal justice system has skyrocketed; many have been swept up in the war on drugs and subject to increasingly punitive sentencing policies for nonviolent offenses. Many of these women struggle with substance abuse, mental illness, and histories of physical and sexual abuse. Few get the services they need. The toll on women, girls, and their families is devastating.

Every day, in courtrooms, legislatures, and the public square, the ACLU fights to ensure that the criminal justice system treats women and girls fairly, protects the health and safety of women and girls in its custody, and facilitates their successful reentry into their communities.

With the exception of Montgomery County, no other jurisdictions provide inmates with written information regarding the health care services they have access to or the specific policies that apply to them. This means that these individuals in the care, custody, and control of the state do not know what to expect during their pregnancies, nor do they know their rights to care.

Among the various policies regarding medical care is the jurisdiction or private facility's policies on abortion care access. Whether an incarcerated woman decides to continue her pregnancy to term or have an abortion, she has a constitutionally protected right to obtain appropriate medical care.

HB 787 ensures that women who are pregnant in prison are afforded the basic information about the healthcare they will receive while in prison.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges the Committee to favorably report HB 787.

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