ASSEMBLY, No. 4953

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 9, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman Murphy

SYNOPSIS

Requires DOC to provide prenatal and post-partum education and services for certain inmates.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/9/2020)

AN ACT concerning education and services for certain pregnant inmates and supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. Every female inmate 60 years of age and under shall be tested for pregnancy upon entering a State correctional facility. Upon confirmation of pregnancy, the Commissioner of Corrections shall provide the appropriate prenatal and post-partum services for each pregnant inmate, including but not limited to the following:

(1) prenatal education;

(2) prenatal medical evaluation and care;

(3) nutritional counseling and supplements as prescribed by a physician;

(4) counseling regarding family planning, birth control, test results, termination of pregnancy, child placement services, and religious counseling, if desired by the inmate; and

(5) appropriate post-partum education and care.

b. A pregnant inmate electing to carry the pregnancy to term shall be provided ongoing prenatal care and support including obstetrical services, suitable maternity clothes, reasonable housing assignments, and appropriate exercise and reduced work schedules, as deemed medically advisable by the treating physician.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the Commissioner of Corrections to provide appropriate prenatal and post-partum services to expectant mothers.

Nationwide women represent a small minority of the correction population; however, at any given time, approximately six to 10 percent of incarcerated women are pregnant (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2011). Many women first learn of their pregnancy upon entry to a correctional facility. At the time of their arrest and incarceration, many of these expectant mothers lack prenatal care and need considerable support to improve the clinical outcomes of their pregnancy. Incarcerated women tend to have complicated and high-risk pregnancies due to increased rates of substance use disorders and psychological distress.

This bill provides that incarcerated expectant mothers are required to receive prenatal education; prenatal medical evaluation and care; nutritional counseling and supplements; counseling regarding family planning, birth control, test results, termination of pregnancy, child placement services, and religious counseling, if desired; and post-partum education and care.