



February 14, 2024

Jeanette Grenz

Treasurer, Ministry to Incarcerated Families, United Women in Faith (formerly United Methodist Women)

Proponent Written-Only Testimony on SB 489

Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Chair Gossage and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Nursery Program for Incarcerated Moms (SB 489). I have been involved in the Ministry to Incarcerated Families for over 25 years and now I serve as treasurer and as a volunteer at retreats. I have watched these women interact with their children - the joy when they get together and the pain when they have to say goodbye again. As a mother myself, I can't imagine the pain of giving childbirth and then handing my baby over to someone else to care for. My daughter has spent many years as a NICU nurse and she knows how important it is for moms and newborns to bond with each other. If incarcerated women were allowed to keep their babies with them, it would reduce recidivism and improve the lives of both the moms and the babies. For our state, it would save the cost of foster care for many of these babies and lead to better mental health outcomes for both the moms and the babies. Kansas would be the 11th state to have a nursery program at a correctional facility. Missouri passed a similar law last year and Nebraska has had a nursery in its women's prison since 1994.

For these reasons and many others, I hope you will pass the Nursery Program for Incarcerated Women, SB 489.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony with you today. Feel free to contact me with any questions at jgrenz@sbcglobal.net.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Grenz

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