

Wilmington, Delaware
March 6, 2025

#xxxx

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Wilmington City Council 2022-2025 Strategic Plan

Sponsor:

goal of promoting a “Healthy Wilmington” with physical health services to support all

**Council
Member
Owens**

residents, House Bill 3 (HB 3), An Act to Amend Title 11 of the Delaware Code Related to Breastfeeding facilitates comprehensive perinatal healthcare for women in the custody of the

Co-Sponsors:

Department of Corrections (DOC), as well as resources for postnatal maternal and infant health; and

**Council
Members
Darby
Oliver
Harlee
Cabrerera**

WHEREAS, HB 3 creates a breastfeeding and lactation program within the DOC to accommodate pregnant, postpartum, and lactating women in custody. The program includes provisions for expressing, disposing, and storing breast milk for delivery to infants and toddlers, supplying the necessary equipment, offering nutrition information and meal plans, and mandates the DOC to publish an annual report on program participation and services provided; and

WHEREAS, three-quarters of incarcerated women are of childbearing age. Nearly 80% were sexually active with men within the three months prior to their incarceration. As a result, around 1,400 pregnant women are admitted to state and federal prisons nationally, leading to over 800 pregnancies in custody. Additionally, only 50% of pregnant women in state prisons and 46% in federal prisons receive prenatal care; and

WHEREAS, the number of women in Delaware’s prisons has more than tripled between 1978 and 2017. At any given time, 11 to 20 of the approximately 375 female prisoners at Baylor Women’s Correctional Institution are pregnant. Pregnant prisoners give birth at

Christiana Hospital but must return to the prison with restrictions, separated from their infants, who are typically handed off to family members or placed in foster care; and

WHEREAS, breast milk is naturally produced and readily available, significantly reducing infant mortality and improving maternal health and postpartum recovery, while also lowering overall healthcare costs. Fully-breastfed infants generally require fewer sick visits, prescriptions, and hospitalizations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that insufficient breastfeeding rates contribute to over \$3 billion in additional annual healthcare costs in the U.S. for both mothers and children; and

WHEREAS, breast milk provides essential antibodies, vitamins, minerals, and fatty acids that are crucial for the health, growth, and development of infants. It reduces their risk of various conditions including severe lower respiratory tract infections, gastrointestinal illnesses, ear infections, asthma, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), childhood obesity, and childhood leukemia; and

WHEREAS, breastfeeding provides benefits for mothers after childbirth, including a reduced risk of certain breast and ovarian cancers, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and decreased postpartum bleeding; and

WHEREAS, due to the benefits of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding is recommended by maternal health professionals for the first six months of life, and mothers are encouraged to continue breastfeeding for at least one year and up to two years and beyond; and

WHEREAS, breastfeeding provides essential bonding between the mother and child, promoting child development and maternal well-being. Skin-to-skin contact helps babies feel safe, warm, secure, and loved, while also boosting oxytocin levels, which aids milk flow and calms mothers; and

WHEREAS, incarceration imposes postpartum separation, severely disrupting infant proximity and physical contact. This disruption negatively impacts the vital bonding and emotional connection between mother and child, potentially leading to adverse effects on the mother’s mental health and the child’s early development; and

WHEREAS, the breastfeeding and lactation program that HB 3 proposes to establish within the DOC will ensure health equity by providing essential maternal and infant care. This initiative not only benefits the individual families involved but also contributes to broader public health, fostering a healthier and more equitable community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that this Legislative body expresses strong support for HB 3, An Act to Amend Title 11 of the Delaware Code Related to Breastfeeding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council encourages the honorable members of the Delaware General Assembly to support the passage of HB 3.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution expresses Wilmington City Council support for House Bill 3 (HB 3), An Act to Amend Title 11 of the Delaware Code Related to Breastfeeding facilitates comprehensive perinatal healthcare for women in the custody of the Department of Corrections (DOC), as well as resources for postnatal maternal and infant health. The amendments to Title 11 proposed in HB 3 are in accordance with the Wilmington City Council 2022-2025 Strategic Plan goal of promoting a “Healthy Wilmington” with physical health services to support all residents.