



# Expecting Justice:

## The Status of Pregnancy and Reproductive Health Care Policies in Illinois County Jails



**Expecting Justice** is the first study ever conducted of reproductive health care, pregnancy and postpartum policies in county jails throughout Illinois. Developed as a joint effort of the Women's Justice Institute (WJI) and the ACLU of Illinois, it includes recommendations for systemic changes that are critical to the health, well-being and safety of incarcerated pregnant people statewide.

“In jail, you are treated like your child is a mistake and that because you're in jail, you're going to be a horrible mother. People who are pregnant in jail deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. **Our health, and the health of our babies, should matter. We are humans, not animals.**”

– Toni Tranchita, detained while pregnant

**Expecting Justice documents startling narratives from women who have been pregnant in Illinois county jails. Repeated themes included:**

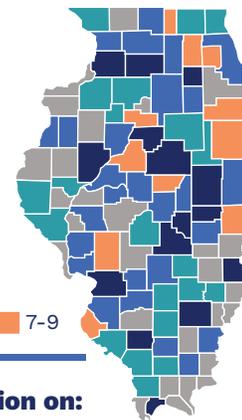
- Lack of appropriate medical care
- Dismissal of requests for assistance
- Dangerous use of restraints, like belly chains
- Lack of sufficient nourishment
- Dehumanizing verbal abuse
- Isolation

**Expecting Justice collected information from Illinois' 102 counties regarding their policies on the following categories:**

- Access to menstrual products
- Testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS
- Access to contraception
- Access to abortion
- Prenatal and postpartum care
- Labor and delivery care
- Lactation support
- Use of restraints for pregnant and postpartum individuals
- Use of solitary confinement for pregnant and postpartum individuals

**The data analyzed in Expecting Justice showed that most Illinois county jails lack written policies needed to safeguard reproductive health and appropriate treatment of pregnant and postpartum individuals.**

- 28 counties did not provide written policies or other information related to the nine categories.
- No county provided written policies related to all nine categories, and only one county provided written policies or other information related to all nine categories.
- Only 11 counties provided written policies or other information related to at least seven of the nine categories.



Written policies or other information provided: 0 1-2 3-4 5-6 7-9

**Counties provided the most written policies or other information on:**

- Prenatal and postpartum care (60 counties)
- Use of restraints during pregnancy/postpartum (66 counties)

**Counties provided the fewest written policies or other information on:**

- Use of solitary confinement during pregnancy/postpartum (6 counties)
- Contraception access (17 counties)
- Lactation (18 counties)

**Expecting Justice calls for measures to ensure access to reproductive health care, and that protect the health, dignity and well-being of pregnant and postpartum individuals in the custody of county jails. These include:**

- Banning the unnecessary use of restraints on pregnant or postpartum individuals in all jails and prisons statewide.
- Creating a Task Force to examine the issue, collect data, and develop additional recommendations.
- Oversight of jail compliance with relevant state laws by the Illinois Department of Corrections.