



## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES**

### **POSITION STATEMENT**

**On**

### **Maryland House Bill 829**

### **Pregnant Detainees and Inmates – Restraint Restrictions and Reporting**

The National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) was founded in 1979 to, among other things, ensure equal justice for women, protect the rights of individuals, and bring about improvements concerning matters of importance in improving the administration of justice. NAWJ's diverse membership includes women and men at all levels of the federal, state, trial, military and administrative judiciary from nearly every state in the nation.

In furtherance of our mission to improve the administration of justice, NAWJ has long advocated for basic fairness and equity for people who are incarcerated. In 1991, NAWJ adopted a resolution urging an end to discrimination against incarcerated women. For years, NAWJ members in Maryland have volunteered in correctional facilities to bring educational programming to women and girls in prison.

In 2009, in recognition that leading medical and legal authorities have documented significant risk of harm in shackling pregnant women, and the lack of risk of flight that women pose in such circumstances, NAWJ members voted to adopt a resolution formally opposing the practice of shackling pregnant women and urging action by its members wherever such practices exist.

In furtherance of that commitment, NAWJ supports HB 829, and in particular, the proposed restrictions on the use of restraints on pregnant incarcerated girls and women in transportation, labor, and childbirth.

**Adopted by the Board of Directors Executive Committee**

**By online vote February 25, 2013**

***Joan V. Churchill***

**Honorable Joan V. Churchill**

**President, NAWJ**