

BIRTH

BEHIND

BARs

01 Ways
to Support
Woman In
Childbirth
E Book

5 Point Restraints

Work better than a straight jacket. Restrains the wrists and ankles. Then straps across the midsection of the body.



Shackling of Pregnant Women Prisoners: A Violation of Human Rights

Shackling pregnant women, including during labor, delivery and postnatal care , is a violation of human rights.

Restraints used in Prison

Used in the United States and consists of any physical restraint or mechanical device used to control the movement of a prisoners body or limbs, including but not limited to flex cuffs, soft restraints, hard metal handcuffs, black box, chubb cuffs, leg irons, belly chains, a security or tether chain, or convex shield.

Handcuffed During 3rd Trimester



The Stats

- The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics listed the correctional population in the United States in 2009 to be 2,292,133, of which 198,000(8.7%) were women. Resource allocation, policies, services and programs are predominantly based on the needs of male prisoners, and that shackling is aimed at “controlling” the most violent men

Handcuffed During Labor



What people are facing

Women's numbers are the fastest rising within the United States prison system.

Given that the majority of women prisoners are poor, and of those poor women, most are of color, a disproportionate number of pregnant women who are shackled are women of color.

Shackled Postnatal



In Anchorage, Alaska, a prisoner is confined in shackles eight days after giving birth. The prisoner had no history of violence or attempting to escape and was being watched by two armed guards. Photo © Evelyn Atwood.

What's Being Done

Resistance from those who have been directly impacted both in the prison and in the community fuels the work of the National Anti-shackling Movement.

What's Being Done

- The National Anti-shackling Coalition supported changing the state statutes banning the practice in New Mexico, New York and Texas. The Texas victory is especially significant in that the legislation also bans shackling girls in state detention centers.

Grassroots Organizing



Formerly Incarcerated Women's Resistance

- Formerly Incarcerated women participated in developing the legislation, organizing, gathering stories from women who had been shackled and recently released, speaking with the media, fundraising and speaking with legislators.

Direct Actions



NY Governor Patterson agrees to sign Anti-Shackling bill into law



States that no longer shackle women during birth and delivery

- California
- Colorado
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- New Mexico
- New York
- Nevada
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- Texas
- Vermont
- Washington
- West Virginia

Why a grassroots strategy?

- Grassroots strategies have long brought about legislative change through the organizing of those most affected by policies and practices that continue to dehumanize those who are most vulnerable.
- Education is key to grassroots organizing from both ends of the spectrum.