

Thank you Mr. Chair and members of the committee. My name is Kamella Ritchie and I am testifying on behalf of myself today in support of House Bill 1187.

In 2016 I was incarcerated in Arapahoe county I was pregnant and addicted to heroin. They put me on an opiate protocol. The day before I miscarried at 16 weeks, the jail left me in withdrawal the entire day because the nurses were behind on bringing meds, and I didn't get my dose until bedtime. The next morning at breakfast I was in intense pain and spotting - I told the deputy and he told me to lock down and tell the nurse when she comes with the med cart in three hours. When the nurse came she demanded proof that I was bleeding and I had to go remove my pad and bring it and show it to her it - had my mucus plug on it. She said I might be miscarrying and they sent me back to my cell to lock down. When I started bleeding more profusely I had to hit the button in my cell multiple times before they came to help me. What no one told me is that at 16 weeks you go through labor when miscarrying and with every contraction I bleed more. After a lot of debate from the deputies, they decided to take me to the hospital. They took me out to the booking area and as I was bleeding out all over my clothes and the floor The deputies made me mop up the blood I was getting everywhere as other inmates watched in horror and shared their shock and disbelief a deputy finally just gave me towels to wrap myself in and asked me to sit down. By the time I got to the hospital I was in full blown labor chained to a bed and the deputy who had come with left and they sent me to a cell in the basement of the hospital, That made me feel less than human as they moved me to the cells in the basement of Denver health. I almost bled to death and had to receive an emergency blood transfusion. Denver health held me in their basement cell for almost two days, when I was stable they brought me back to the jail and placed me in the Special Housing Unit while they gave me meds for my uterus to contract, The moment I was back in the jail they stopped opiate protocol and let me know the only reason I received it in the first place was to sustain life since opiate withdrawals can cause miscarriages.

The jail never offered mental health services, or resources. There was no follow-up appointment to make sure I was physically okay. To this day I am still impacted by the aftermath of this negligence I am hypervigilant in the care of my pregnancy due to the trauma I experienced every little thing causes fear of another loss. In my experience jail isn't the place to be at while you are pregnant because they are negligent in care and disdainful towards helping incarcerated individuals even in life threatening situations.

Please vote yes on HB 1187. Thank you for your time.