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Representative Hart and Senator Jones File Ava's Law

Tallahassee, Fla. – State **Representative Dianne Hart (D-Tampa)** and **Senator Shevrin Jones (D-Miami Gardens)** have filed [HB 363](#) and [SB 630](#) respectively. This legislation creates processes to adequately provide care for pregnant women who are being held in custody. These bills have been titled “Ava’s Law” in memory of Ava Thompson. Her mother Erica was denied the necessary care while in custody at the Alachua County Jail and was made to give birth in a cell. The lack of care she received while in labor resulted in her newborn child passing away hours later at a local hospital.

Representative Dianne Hart issued the following statement:

“I am honored to carry this legislation here in the House. I thought this issue was handled with the passage of the Tammy Jackson Act, however, we find ourselves in a similar situation once again. My heart bleeds for Erica Thompson on the passing of her child and while this legislation will not bring Ava back, it will ensure that no other mother or child will have to experience what Erica and Ava did in that county jail.”

Senator Shevrin Jones issued the following statement:

“Let this sink in: A pregnant woman was left alone in her cell while she was clearly in distress and screaming in pain. Rather than make the appropriate health-related decisions to medically treat a patient in crisis, jail officials stood idly by and offered no medical assistance. I am proud to partner with Representative Dianne Hart to re-file the ‘Protecting the Dignity of Women and Infants Act’ and rename it ‘Ava’s Law’ in the lost child’s memory. Women are the fastest growing prison population in this country, and yet, they are treated shamefully. Accessible care ought to be a human right because all people, regardless of societal or economic status, deserve safe, healthy environments, access to basic necessities, and above all, dignity.”

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