

FAMILY ISSUE FACT SHEET

NO. 7 2023 (JANUARY 2023)

SERVE WOMEN ACT

HB 2427 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE; PREGNANT VICTIM; SENTENCING

HB 2502 CHILD SUPPORT; DATE OF PREGNANCY

HB 2530 SUBSTANCE EXPOSURE; PREGNANT WOMEN; NEGLECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arizona law should value and serve pregnant women; it is in the best interest of the woman and the state. With that in mind, Arizona lawmakers have drafted three bills designed to combat some of the financial and physical obstacles women face when victimized or left to care for a baby alone.

These bills are designed to help victims of domestic violence and substance abuse, among other challenges.

BACKGROUND

Pregnant women often do not have the support system they feel they need to raise a child or bring the baby to term for adoption. In addition, pregnant women who are addicted to drugs often do not get the help they need to protect themselves and their babies from the ravages of substance abuse.

Civil societies should treat pregnant women with respect and compassion. State laws can hold those who victimize pregnant women accountable for violence against the woman and her unborn baby. Women receiving child support should begin receiving it as soon as it is confirmed she is pregnant to help cover the cost of prenatal healthcare and the necessities of parenting.

WHAT THE BILLS DO

[HB 2427](#) holds a person guilty of aggravated assault if he or she commits a crime while having reason to believe the victim was pregnant. It raises the penalty from two to five years in jail. Other states, including Delaware, Ohio, and Utah have similar laws including increased penalties for those convicted of abusing a pregnant woman.

[HB 2502](#) requires child support to be paid from the time of a positive pregnancy test confirmed by a licensed healthcare professional if that date is earlier than the divorce date, legal separation date, or court order date.

[HB 2530](#) requires licensed healthcare professionals who learn a pregnant patient is using dangerous drugs to refer her for treatment. The report may not lead to an investigation of abuse or neglect so not to discourage women from getting prenatal care or other healthcare.

TALKING POINTS

- Pregnant women deserve additional protections from the state. Anyone who victimizes them should be held accountable for both mother and her unborn child.
- Healthcare professionals are the first line of defense for many pregnant women ravaged by substance abuse. They can help both mother and her unborn child, without fear of triggering a criminal investigation.

CONCLUSION

Civil societies should treat pregnant women with respect and compassion. State lawmakers should ensure pregnant women get the help they need to protect themselves and their unborn babies, especially if they have been victimized. Those who abuse such women should be held accountable.