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## Settlement Reached with Woman Restrained During Labor

OLYMPIA – The Department of Corrections will pay Casandra Brawley, a formerly incarcerated woman, \$125,000 to settle a claim that she was restrained while in labor. Legal Voice, a women’s rights organization, and Seattle law firm Peterson Young Putra represented Ms. Brawley, who alleged that she was restrained during labor leading up to the delivery of her baby boy at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Tacoma in April of 2007.

“The Washington Department of Corrections is a leader in providing program opportunities for mothers during their incarceration,” said Secretary Eldon Vail. “We are committed to improving practices that provide opportunities for mothers to bond with their children.”

Legal Voice worked with the legislature and other women’s rights organizations to draft and pass a bill that specifically outlines the responsibilities of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies regarding the use of restraints with regard to pregnant women who are incarcerated. The newly passed law is similar to DOC’s existing policies and procedures but provides additional guidance to correctional officers and applies to other correctional facilities in Washington State, including city and county operated jails.

“We are pleased that our client has been compensated for what she endured, and that the legislature has eliminated any possibility of women in prison experiencing this treatment,” said Sara Ainsworth of Legal Voice, co-counsel for Ms. Brawley.

DOC does not admit any liability in this case but saw this as an opportunity to bring finality to the case and limit the costs and risks of continuing litigation.

Contact: Sara Ainsworth, Legal Voice (425) 306-4761

Michael Wampold, Peterson Young Putra, (206) 624-6800

Contact: Belinda D. Stewart, DOC, Communications Department (360) 725-8821

907 Pine Street  
Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98101

T 206-682-9552  
F 206-682-9556

[LegalVoice.org](http://LegalVoice.org)