

Impact Report

The Marshall Project tracks the impact of our journalism on policymakers, advocates and other media. This report highlights some key examples.



Brandy Moore with her daughter Remi. ERIC SHELTON/MISSISSIPPI TODAY

Women Released in Mississippi

Four women serving 20-year prison sentences for using drugs while pregnant were freed — and the local prosecutor stopped pursuing such cases — following our reporting with Mississippi Today. In December, we [published a story](#) about how a central Mississippi district attorney routinely prosecuted women for using drugs while pregnant. The prosecutor claimed he was trying to get women into treatment and didn't want to incarcerate them, but we found at least four examples of women serving 20-year prison sentences. One mother, Brandy Moore, chose to take her case to trial when given a similar plea option that could have sent her to prison for decades. The prosecutor backed down and dropped Moore's case. Since we published Moore's story, the local judge signed orders [releasing four other women](#), shaving a combined 49 years off their sentences and

saving taxpayers over \$1 million. The prosecutor said he would no longer file such severe charges against women accused of using drugs while pregnant.

1 CASE DROPPED

4 WOMEN RELEASED FROM PRISON

49 YEARS OF FREEDOM GIVEN BACK

\$1M TAXPAYER DOLLARS SAVED

WATCHDOG REPORT ON ABUSE IN FEDERAL PRISONS FOLLOWS OUR INVESTIGATION

Our ongoing [investigative series](#) into widespread abuse in the Federal Bureau of Prisons — reported in partnership with NPR — was a key factor in leading the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General to issue a [sharp critique](#) of the agency, specifically its use of restraints on incarcerated people. Our earlier reporting had [revealed](#) that shackles were fixed so tightly to prisoners that they caused permanent injury, leading Sen. Dick Durbin, D - Illinois, to push for Senate hearings. The Inspector General's [report](#) followed those hearings.

FEDERAL SCRUTINY OF REPRODUCTIVE CARE IN PRISON



Teresa Tippetts looks at a photograph of her daughter Quitney Armstead, who is awaiting trial on charges of chemical endangerment of her child in Alabama. SYDNEY FOSTER FOR THE MARSHALL PROJECT

The Marshall Project's coverage of [pregnancy](#) and [reproductive care](#) behind bars revealed numerous issues pregnant and postpartum women face, which sparked interest in the office of U.S. Sen. John Ossoff, a Democrat from Georgia. Ossoff, who was the chair of the Senate Judiciary Human Rights Subcommittee, went on to conduct an inquiry into prison and jail conditions for pregnant prisoners. In February 2025, Ossoff introduced a bill — the [Births in Custody Reporting Act](#) — that would require states to collect and report data on maternal and postpartum care in correctional facilities, including whether or not women received pre- and postnatal care. The legislation would also require the attorney general's office to conduct a study to understand the connection between prison practices and stillbirths, miscarriages, and infant and maternal deaths.



REFORM EFFORTS FOR CRIMINALIZED SURVIVORS

[Our reporting](#) on domestic violence survivors incarcerated for crimes committed by their abusers has informed efforts to change sentencing policy in Washington state and shaped international advocacy. In 2024, Washington lawmakers considered legislation to give judges more discretion in cases involving abuse; a state [health impact review](#) supporting the proposal cited The Marshall Project’s findings. Internationally, [our work](#) was referenced in [a stakeholder report](#) to the United Nations Human Rights Council by The Advocates for Human Rights, calling for greater protections for criminalized survivors.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON OFFICER MISCONDUCT IN NEW YORK STATE



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[Our reporting](#) on abuse by corrections officers in New York and the state’s failures to hold abusive officers accountable was cited in two [bills introduced](#) in Albany this past session, including [a Senate proposal](#) to reform the disciplinary system. The legislative landscape shifted dramatically after body camera footage showed officers beating and choking Robert Brooks to death in December 2024. In testimony before lawmakers, Brooks’ father cited our findings on the department’s disciplinary failures. The legislature has allocated \$418 million for body and fixed cameras in prisons and has required that staff wear and activate body cameras during all interactions with incarcerated people.

LEGISLATORS PUSH FOR PAY BOOST FOR INCARCERATED FIREFIGHTERS

California legislators introduced a bill to raise the wages for incarcerated firefighters less than a week after [we partnered with The Los Angeles Times to report](#) on how more than 900 prison firefighters were responding to the crisis in Los Angeles. Our reporting detailed how incarcerated fire crew members in California make between \$5.80 and \$10.24 per day, and earn an additional \$1 per hour when responding to emergencies, up to \$26.90 over a 24-hour shift. Less than a week later, two California legislators introduced [Assembly Bill 247](#), which would raise incarcerated firefighters’ hourly wage to the federal minimum wage, \$7.25 an hour.



Incarcerated firefighters in the Antelope fire crew march into action in Sonoma County, California, in 2017. Much of their work involves cutting lines into burning brush with power tools so that water lines can be brought in. BRIAN L. FRANK

IMPACTING LOCAL JOURNALISM NATIONWIDE: Investigate This!

Through Investigate This! — our initiative to help local newsrooms pursue their own criminal justice reporting — we provided support to the Ocala Gazette in Florida for its ongoing coverage of deaths within the Marion County Jail. Deaths that occur behind bars go largely underreported, which means medical negligence and excessive use of force can continue to happen unchecked. [One example](#) focused on the 2023 death of Dennis DiGenova, a 73-year-old veteran.

To help other news operations follow in the Gazette’s footsteps, we developed a [reporting tool kit](#) on investigating jail deaths and an accompanying [tipsheet](#) about the Death in Custody Reporting Act. Journalists can also request a consultation with Marshall Project staff to discuss reporting hurdles, which is what the Ocala Gazette did.



During meetings over Zoom, staff made us aware of the Death in Custody Reporting Act and how our local jail should be complying with it. Equipped with that knowledge, we gathered more data and identified gaps in reporting in the state of Florida that had previously gone unnoticed.”

CAROLINE BRAUCHLER,
REPORTER FOR THE OCALA GAZETTE