Dear Tony, Satz, Finkelstein, and Inch,

We write to you in your capacity as State and local government officials and overseers of Broward County State correctional institutions. Over the past couple of weeks, our community has been hurt, disturbed and enraged by the news that a mother, Ms. Tammy Jackson, while in custody of the Broward Sheriff’s Office ("BSO"), was forced to give birth to a child while in isolation and without proper medical care. The Dignity Florida Coalition ("Dignity Florida") and our allies are outraged by this incident and extremely concerned about the safety of our women and girls, particularly women and girls of color that are in the custody of BSO.

Dignity Florida was created in July 2018 by a group of formerly incarcerated women and allies to address the issues and abuses incarcerated women face in Florida criminal institutions. We have held meetings throughout the state and spoken to hundreds of formerly incarcerated women who shared stories of horror and neglect experienced while incarcerated in Florida. We were successful with passing the “Dignity For Incarcerated Women Act” through the Florida Legislators in 2019. Since then we have been able to gain the respect and support of the community, including state, federal and local elected officials. We have also mobilized hundreds of formerly incarcerated women and girls to the State Capitol to share their stories with legislators. We Admire these women’s bravery for sharing their stories in hope to make change.

While we remain committed to changing laws that improve the living conditions of incarcerated women, we also advocate for and contribute practical solutions and resources to restore basic dignities for this vulnerable population. The recent incident in the Broward Sheriff’s Office has shone a light on the mistreatment of incarcerated people in BSO custody, but evidence and reports suggests there is rampant abuse and neglect statewide. Our community is outraged and Dignity Florida is responding with both a call to action and an offer of collaboration.

Sheriff Gregory Tony
Broward’s Sheriff’s Office
2601 W. Broward Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312

Michael J. Satz,
State Attorney 17th Judicial Circuit (Broward County)
Broward County Judicial Complex
201 Southeast 6th Street, Suite 07150
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Howard Finkelstein,
Public Defender Broward County Florida
201 SE 6th Street, Rm 3872
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Mark S. Inch, Secretary
Florida Department of Corrections
501 S. Calhoun Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Dignity Florida condemns the abuse, mistreatment, denial of medical attention, sexual harassment and assault on incarcerated women. We invite you, as public officials, to likewise condemn such atrocities by issuing a public statement, but also and perhaps more importantly, by authorizing and enforcing policies and procedures that insure the dignity and protection of incarcerated women.

The levels of inhumane treatment and assault that women experience while incarcerated in the State of Florida is unacceptable and we no longer are standing by silently while women are harmed. Incarceration is punishment, but a woman should not be dehumanized in the process.

We call for:
· An immediate investigation and public report of the incident involving Ms. Jackson, including swift accountability measures taken against all those who were responsible for Ms. Jackson’s and safety, health and care, and that of her child.
· Immediate termination of all Correctional Officers that that were responsible for or complacent in the neglect of Ms. Jackson.
· Public disclosure and transparency on the process of how pregnant incarcerated women are handled and what treatment is given to them while in custody.
· Termination of solitary confinement of pregnant women.
· Establishment of policies and procedures to treat and protect incarcerated women that are pregnant; survivors of sexual abuse; and/or suffer mental disability.
· Assessment and investment in rehabilitative programming specifically designed for female inmates.

We offer:
· Community engagement and support.
· Academic and expert insights.
· Oversight.

The rehabilitation and de-carceration of women has been a national conversation. Because Florida incarcerates more women than most other states, it is appropriate that serious and appropriate assessments and reforms begin in this State. While the report of what happened to Ms. Jackson is appalling, we also have the opportunity to use the incident as a catalyst for local level and statewide change. Our community is calling for a major shift in the rehabilitative and correctional institute culture - away from devaluing incarcerated women and girls and a push for a more equitable, accountable, and healing system. As officials, overseers, and influencers in these institutions you have the opportunity to lead the charge. We therefore invite your response, insight and collaboration.

In Power,

Dignity Florida