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**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**From:** David Tamisiea, Executive Director  
**Date:** March 5, 2025  
**Re:** Senate Bill 2352 - Children of Inmates to Reside at the Heart River Correctional Center

The North Dakota Catholic Conference supports Senate Bill 2352. It is estimated that about 2,000 prisoners in American correctional facilities give birth each year. Many more are incarcerated after their child is born.

As Pope St. John Paul II wrote in his 1998 Apostolic Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women:

“Motherhood involves a special communion with the mystery of life, as it develops in the woman’s womb. The mother is filled with wonder at this mystery of life, and ‘understands’ with unique intuition what is happening inside her. In the light of the ‘beginning’, the mother accepts and loves as a person the child she is carrying in her womb.”

The importance of this bond between mother and child is seen in research conducted in states that have prison nurseries. Studies indicate that women who are allowed to stay with their babies while incarcerated have lower recidivism rates<sup>1</sup>, and their children have lower rates of severe anxiety and depression.<sup>2</sup>

Incarceration does not remove a woman’s — a mother’s — inherent dignity and worth. Nor does it negate the child’s inherent need for bonding. Senate Bill 2352 is ultimately a pro-family, pro-life, and pro-woman bill.

We respectfully ask for a **Do Pass** recommendation on Senate Bill 2352.

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<sup>1</sup> Carlson, J. R. (2018). Prison Nurseries: A Way to Reduce Recidivism. The Prison Journal, 98(6), 760-775. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885518812694>

<sup>2</sup> Goshin, Lorie S et al. “Preschool Outcomes of Children Who Lived as Infants in a Prison Nursery.” The Prison journal vol. 94,2 (2014): 139-158. doi:10.1177/0032885514524692