

Is it sound policy to jail expectant mothers for substance abuse and take away their babies?



“Many professional health care and child welfare organizations have banded together against criminalization on the basis that it is antithetical to the best interests of both the mother and the child.”

“... criminalization has no proven effect on improving infant health or deterring substance abuse by pregnant women.”

“In fact, criminalization may deter the pregnant woman from seeking out necessary prenatal care for fear of losing their children or being arrested.”

“A drug-exposed infant should be removed from the custody of his/her parent(s) only if the parent(s) are unable to protect and care for the infant and either support services are not sufficient to manage this risk, or the parent(s) have refused such services.”*

If removal is good policy, shouldn't we also place infants in foster care if the mother smokes, imbibes or is obese? We could build orphanages as well as prisons!

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
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* *Substance Use During Pregnancy: Time for Policy to Catch Up with Research*, by Barry M. Lester, PhD, Lynne Andreozzi, and Lindsey Appiah, published April 20, 2004. www.harmreductionjournal.com/content/1/1/5