Today, on International Women’s Day, dozens of formerly incarcerated women, advocates, and community members have gathered at the Texas Capitol to call for support for legislation that would address the needs of women impacted by the criminal justice system.

Texas incarcerates more women by sheer number than any other state. Nearly all of these women have experienced complex trauma and 81% are mothers. The majority are incarcerated for nonviolent (predominately drug related) offenses and would be better served in their communities than in Texas prisons.

We are calling for the Texas Legislature to address the DRIVERS of women into incarceration - especially substance abuse, mental health issues, past victimization, and poverty. It is also vitally important to treat incarcerated women with DIGNITY and to prepare them for a safe, successful reentry.

Taking these steps will stop the cycle of reoffending and re-incarceration that comes at great expense to taxpayers, families, and communities.