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**Representative Hart's Criminal Justice Reform Bills Pass the House Floor**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – State **Representative Dianne Hart's (D- Tampa) sponsored bills, [House Bill 779](#)** Ava's Law and **[House Bill 1045](#)** Certified Peer Specialist programs, passed the House floor today.

**HB 779** creates process for pregnant women to petition the court for a deferral of their sentence until they have been able to give birth to their child. This bill has been titled "Ava's Law" in memory of Ava Thompson. Her mother, Erica, was denied necessary care while in custody at the Alachua County Jail and was made to give birth in a cell. The lack of care she received while in labor resulted in her newborn child passing away hours later at a local hospital.

**HB 1045** creates the Certified Peer Specialist Program in the Florida Department of Corrections to allow those currently incarcerated to become a certified peer specialist to help those who are battling with substance abuse issues. This legislation creates a pathway of gainful employment for those returning home.

"I am grateful to have been the sponsor of such important and monumental legislation. These bills help create real change within our criminal justice system—changes that will save and change lives for the better. However, we cannot stop here we must continue to push for a system that is fair and just for all," said **Representative Hart.**

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