

Letter: Treat, don't punish

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I was sad to read about the arrest of Mallory Loyola. Threatening a new mom with jail time does not help improve her life, the life of her family or the public health of our communities (July 17 Viewpoint column by Clarence Page, "How to treat 'bad' parents"). Addiction is not a choice. It is a health issue. This law is an out-of-touch and cruel way of addressing the very real problem of addiction.

Such punitive measures have proved to be ineffective time and again, and yet our state chooses to waste our limited tax dollars locking up mothers instead of making their health care needs its top priority. Only this type of support ensures successful outcomes for mothers and their children.

The costs of treatment programs are a mere fraction of the costs to incarcerate mothers and the human costs of tearing families apart. Putting mothers behind bars is not the solution.

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