

## House Resolution 268

By: Representatives Neal of the 74<sup>th</sup>, Park of the 101<sup>st</sup>, Lopez of the 86<sup>th</sup>, and Moore of the 95<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Congress of the United States to abolish the practice of involuntary sterilization  
2 of women in custody of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency;  
3 and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, in 2020, a whistle blower employee at the Irwin Detention Center in Georgia  
5 reported that hysterectomy procedures, or the surgical removal of the uterus, were performed  
6 on immigrant women detained at the facility without informed consent; and

7 WHEREAS, the practice of experimenting with sterilization officially started in the United  
8 States with the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which encouraged the sexual sterilization of  
9 institutionalized people in Virginia in order to improve the "health of the patient and the  
10 welfare of society." In the 1927 case of *Buck v. Bell*, 274 U.S. 200, the Supreme Court  
11 upheld that act, and the decision resulted in 70,000 sterilizations of people deemed "unfit"  
12 to reproduce, largely due to mental illness, but also because of physical disability, poverty,  
13 or race. This case has never been overturned and is still used as an authority to keep these  
14 practices active; and

15 WHEREAS, federally funded sterilization programs took place in 32 states throughout  
16 the 20th century. These programs had disproportionate and devastating impacts on

17 immigrants, people of color, poor people, unmarried mothers, and disabled individuals. It  
18 is estimated that as many as 70,000 Americans were forcibly sterilized during this period;  
19 and

20 WHEREAS, unwanted sterilization is a grave violation of human rights, violating the right  
21 to health, privacy, found a family, and information; and

22 WHEREAS, prohibiting the practice of unauthorized sterilizations of immigrants and  
23 detainees in custody of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency  
24 would represent a transformative and positive step in preserving the basic human and  
25 reproductive rights of these women.

26 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
27 the members of this body urge the Congress of the United States to abolish the practice of  
28 involuntary sterilization of women in the custody of the United States Immigration and  
29 Customs Enforcement agency.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
31 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the  
32 President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the  
33 United States House of Representatives, and all members of the Georgia delegation to  
34 Congress.