

The Honorable John Barrasso  
United States Senate  
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas Carper  
United States Senate  
513 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

April 1, 2019

Dear Senator Barrasso and Senator Carper:

**We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to support the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act (S.528) and discharge the bill from the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works so that it can go to the Senate floor for a vote.** The original bill was introduced in the House and just one week later passed by voice vote. The Senate companion bill was then introduced with bipartisan support.

No matter what they're doing or where they are, people who are breastfeeding need to express milk every few hours. As of 2018, all 50 states have enacted laws to protect a mother's right to breastfeed in any place, public or private, as long as they are authorized to be there. However, there are many environments where they face challenges trying to find a clean and private space to nurse or pump. Many public buildings do not have designated lactation spaces, and many end up pumping in restrooms or on floors. Families of color and low-income women are more likely to face challenges starting and continuing breastfeeding, contributing to lifelong health inequities. **People who are nursing should not have to compromise their milk supply simply because they cannot access a clean and private space to feed or pump.**

#### **About the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act**

The Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act would require that certain public buildings that have a public restroom provide a lactation room, other than a bathroom, that is hygienic and is available for use by a member of the public. A public building may be excluded from the requirement if the building does not contain a lactation room for employees who work in the building and does not have a room that could be repurposed as a lactation space at a reasonable cost; or if new construction would be required and the cost is unfeasible.

A U.S. Government Publishing Office Report on an identical bill in the previous Congressional Session, found that enacting the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act would not affect direct spending or revenues (<https://www.cbo.gov/publication/52475>).

Under current practice, federal agencies provide a designated, non-bathroom space for employees to pump breast milk during the work day. The Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act extends this requirement to include not just employees, but visitors to federal facilities.

In Washington, D.C. alone, there are millions of tourists who visit federal facilities, visitors to federal agencies for meetings and events, and advocates visiting their Members of Congress who require a

suitable place to express breast milk. With the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act, parents who exclusively pump, chest feed, use a supplemental nutrition system (SNS), or simply prefer a private space for breastfeeding would have access to accommodations while utilizing federal facilities.

In addition, breastfeeding employees working in jobs that require travel (police officers, bus drivers, home health care workers, etc.) face some of the most challenging barriers to combining breastfeeding and employment. These employees frequently struggle to access a clean, private space to pump during the work day. The provision of public lactation spaces in federal facilities would remove this barrier for many employees and provide a ready solution to help employers remain in compliance with federal and state laws requiring workplace accommodations for breastfeeding employees.

### **Evidence and Benefits of Breastfeeding**

Breastfeeding is a proven primary prevention strategy, building a foundation for life-long health and wellness. Human milk is the preferred and most appropriate "First Food," adapting over time to meet the changing needs of the growing child. We join the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and all major medical authorities in recommending that infants get no food or drink other than human milk for their first six months and continue to breastfeed for at least the first 1-2 years of life.

The evidence for the value of breastfeeding to children's and women's health is scientific, solid, and continually being reaffirmed by new research. Compared with formula-fed children, those who are breastfed have a reduced risk of ear, skin, stomach, and respiratory infections; diarrhea; sudden infant death syndrome; and necrotizing enterocolitis. In the longer term, breastfed children have a reduced risk of obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, asthma, and childhood leukemia. Women who breastfed their children have a reduced long-term risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers.

Breastfeeding also provides a range of benefits for employers and society. A 2016 study of both maternal and pediatric health outcomes and associated costs based on 2014 breastfeeding rates showed that, if 90% of infants were breastfed according to medical recommendations, 2,600 maternal and child deaths, \$2.4 billion in medical costs, and \$10.8 billion in costs of premature death would be prevented, annually!

We know that 80% of mothers intend to breastfeed, and 83% actually do breastfeed at birth. Yet only 25% of U.S. infants are still exclusively breastfed at six months of age. Most families today choose to breastfeed, but a range of obstacles can make it difficult to fit breastfeeding into parents' lives.

**The Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act is a common sense and important step toward eliminating the barriers to breastfeeding and ensuring federal buildings are part of the public health solution.**

cc: Senators James M. Inhofe, Shelley Moore Capito, Kevin Cramer, Mike Braun, Mike Rounds, Dan Sullivan, John Boozman, Roger F. Wicker, Richard Shelby, Joni Ernst, Benjamin L. Cardin, Bernard Sanders, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jeff Merkley, Kirsten Gillibrand, Cory A. Booker, Edward Markey, Tammy Duckworth, Chris Van Hollen

## CO-SIGNERS

### **International, National, and Tribal Organizations:**

1,000 Days  
A Better Balance  
Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine  
Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
American Association of Birth Centers  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)  
Attachment Parenting International  
Baby Café USA  
Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.  
Breastfeeding USA  
ChangeLab Solutions  
Childbirth and Postpartum Professionals Association  
Every Mother, Inc.  
Healthy Children Project, Inc.  
HealthConnect One  
Human Milk Banking Association of North America  
ImprovingBirth  
The Institute for the Advancement of Breastfeeding and Lactation Education  
International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners®  
International Childbirth Education Association  
La Leche League USA  
Lamaze International  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Professional and Peer Lactation Supporters of Color  
National WIC Association  
Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee  
United States Lactation Consultant Association

### **Regional, State, and Local Organizations:**

The Alabama Breastfeeding Committee  
Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition  
Alimentación Segura Infantil  
The Breastfeeding Center of Ann Arbor  
Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware  
Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington  
BreastfeedLA  
California Breastfeeding Coalition  
Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates  
District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition  
Durhams Baby Café DH Inc  
Gender Justice  
Indiana Breastfeeding Coalition  
INTENT: Houston Area Breastfeeding Coalition  
Kansas Action for Children  
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Kentuckiana Lactation Improvement Coalition  
Lactation Improvement Network of Kentucky  
Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition  
The Macomb County Breastfeeding Coalition  
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition  
Michigan Breastfeeding Network  
Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition  
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition  
New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force  
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.  
New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force  
North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition  
Northern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition  
Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.  
Nurture Lactation Support  
Pathways PA  
Precious Jewels Moms Ministries  
Pretty Mama Breastfeeding LLC  
Southern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition  
Texas Pediatric Society  
Vermont Breastfeeding Network  
Vermont Lactation Consultant Association, Inc.  
West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance  
Wisconsin Breastfeeding Coalition  
Women's Law Project