

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Stephen Knight
United States House of Representatives
1023 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2018

Dear Senator Duckworth and Congressman Knight:

We, the undersigned organizations, thank you for introducing the Friendly Airports for Mothers (FAM) Act of 2017. By leading Congress to protect and support breastfeeding, you demonstrate a commitment to our nation's families. Breastfeeding is a proven primary prevention strategy, building a foundation for life-long health and wellness. Breastfeeding mothers who choose or need to travel should not have to struggle to find lactation spaces, risking their milk supply and thereby their ultimate breastfeeding success.

The FAM Act would require all large and medium hub airports to provide a private, non-bathroom space in each terminal for mothers to express breast milk. The space must be accessible to persons with disabilities, available in each terminal building after the security checkpoint, and include a place to sit, a table or other flat surface, and an electrical outlet. Airports would have two years to comply and would be able to use Airport Improvement Program funds for the purpose of complying with the new requirement.

Human milk is the preferred and most appropriate "First Food," adapting over time to meet the changing needs of the growing child. The United States Breastfeeding Committee joins 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 & pediatric health outcomes and associated costs based on 2012 breastfeeding rates showed that, if 90% of infants were breastfed according to medical recommendations, 3,340 deaths, \$3 billion in medical costs, and \$14.2 billion in costs of premature death would be prevented, annually!

For all of these reasons, *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*; the Institute of Medicine report, *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention*; and the *National Prevention Strategy* each call for promotion of breastfeeding-friendly environments. Yet in spite of this tremendous recognition—and laws in 49 states that specifically allow women to breastfeed in any public or private location—moms continue to

face barriers, even harassment, when breastfeeding in public. And when away from their babies, airports are just one of many public places where moms face challenges finding a clean, private space to pump.

We know that 80% of mothers intend to breastfeed, and 82.5% 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.

No matter what they're doing or where they are, breastfeeding mothers need to express milk every few hours in order to keep up their supply. Missing even one needed pumping session can have several undesirable consequences, including discomfort, leaking, inflammation and infection, decreased supply, and ultimately, breastfeeding cessation. As a result, mothers typically find returning to work a significant barrier to breastfeeding.

Yet very few airports have designated lactation spaces, and many moms end up in restrooms or on airport floors. Travelers rarely have control over how long they are in transit, making accessible accommodations within airports a critical priority. A recent study of 100 airports found that while 62% reported being "breastfeeding friendly," only 8% met the minimum requirements for a breastfeeding mother: an electrical outlet, table, and chair.

Current federal law requires employers to provide nursing mothers who are nonexempt employees a private, non-bathroom location to express breast milk. Airport lactation spaces are therefore an important step to support employers that need to accommodate breast-pumping mothers who travel.

The Friendly Airports for Mothers Act would help keep our nation's families healthy by ensuring breastfeeding travelers and airport employees have access to appropriate facilities. This is an important step toward ensuring *all* families have the opportunity to reach their personal breastfeeding goals.

Again, we applaud your leadership in introducing the FAM Act and stand ready to help you achieve its passage.

Sincerely,

CO-SIGNERS

United States Breastfeeding Committee

National Organizations:

1,000 Days

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

American Academy of Nursing

American Association of Birth Centers

American Breastfeeding Institute

American Civil Liberties Union

American College of Nurse-Midwives

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians

American Nurses Association

American Public Health Association

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Baby Café USA
Baby-Friendly USA
Best for Babes Foundation
Breastfeeding in Combat Boots
Breastfeeding USA
Center for WorkLife Law
Childbirth and Postpartum Professionals Association
Every Mother, Inc,
HealthConnect One
Health Children Project, Inc.
Human Milk Banking Association of North America
ImprovingBirth
International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners
La Leche League USA
Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review Committee
Mom2Mom Global
MomsRising
National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Perinatal Association
National WIC Association
Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
The Milk Mob
Trust for America's Health
Women-Inspired Systems' Enrichment

State/Local Organizations:

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee
Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition
Benton County Human Services, Public Health (MN)
Bethlehem Health Bureau (PA)
Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware
Breastfeeding Coalition of Snohomish County (WA)
Breastfeeding Hawaii
Breastfeeding Support Group LLC (NJ)
BreastfeedLA (CA)
California Breastfeeding Coalition
California WIC Association

Chicago Region Breastfeeding Task Force
Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition
Colorado Lactation Consultant Association
District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition
Gift of Life Foundation
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.
La Leche League of Ashtabula (OH)
Lactation Central Jersey
Lactation Whisperer (FL)
Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition
Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition
Montana State Breastfeeding Coalition
Mothers' Milk Bank of Alabama
New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition
Northern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition
South East Side Breastfeeding Support Group Chicago
Texas Breastfeeding Coalition
Vermont Lactation Consultant Association, Inc.
Wisconsin Breastfeeding Coalition