



The Honorable Carolyn Maloney  
United States House of Representatives  
2308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
United States Senate  
313 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

June 24, 2013

Dear Congresswoman Maloney and Senator Merkley:

We, the undersigned organizations, thank you for introducing the Supporting Working Moms Act of 2013. By leading Congress to protect and support breastfeeding, you demonstrate a commitment to our nation's mothers and children.

The Supporting Working Moms Act would expand existing federal law that ensures that new mothers have the time and space to express milk for their babies while at work. Current law provides mothers who are classified as "non-exempt" (hourly wage-earning) employees with reasonable break times to express milk in a private, non-bathroom location, for one year after their child's birth. The Supporting Working Moms Act would expand this provision to cover approximately 12 million salaried employees, including elementary and secondary school teachers.

Human milk is the optimal source of nutrition for infants, and the United States Breastfeeding Committee joins the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in recommending that infants be exclusively breastfed for six months, and continue to breastfeed for the first year of life and as long afterwards as mutually desired by mother and infant.

As you know, 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 and breast and ovarian cancers. Studies are looking at the effects of breastfeeding on still other diseases and conditions in which breastfeeding may reduce the risk to mothers and infants.

Breastfeeding also provides a range of economic and environmental benefits for society. The future prosperity of our country greatly depends on the productivity of women, as workers *and* as mothers. Women's economic security and the health—emotional and physical—of mothers and families translate directly into the potential of our future workforce and the vigor of our economy.

Most women today choose to breastfeed their infants, but a range of obstacles can make it difficult for women to fit breastfeeding into their lives. The Supporting Working Moms Act tackles one of the most daunting barriers to breastfeeding success: returning to work. Workplace breastfeeding support is a simple and inexpensive way to reduce health care spending and improve the health of our Nation's mothers and babies. Breastfeeding accommodation is a win-win-win for businesses, families, and the economy. Companies who have invested in their breastfeeding employees have substantial return on investment (almost 3:1). Translated, for every dollar spent, three are saved.

The U.S. Surgeon General has called upon employers to "establish and maintain comprehensive, high-quality lactation support programs for their employees" in her landmark *Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*. Federal law currently requires employers to provide reasonable break times and a private, non-bathroom location for nursing mothers to express breast milk, for one year after the child's birth. Yet this provision only applies to "non-exempt" (hourly wage-earning) employees. While this provides protection and support for the most vulnerable workers, this distinction in the law was unintentional and is causing confusion about who is covered and how to implement it efficiently and fairly in all worksites.

The Supporting Working Moms Act would ensure fair and uniform accommodation for all nursing mothers, regardless of how they're paid. 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 Supporting Working Moms Act and stand ready to help you achieve its passage.

Sincerely,



Chair

United States Breastfeeding Committee

#### CO-SIGNERS:

##### **National Organizations:**

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Birth Centers  
American Breastfeeding Institute  
American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Public Health Association  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Association of State and Territorial Public Health  
Nutrition Directors  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal  
Nurses  
Baby-Friendly USA  
Centering Healthcare Institute

Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS)  
Family Values @ Work  
HealthConnect One  
Healthy Children Project  
Human Milk Banking Association of North America  
International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners  
La Leche League USA  
Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review  
Committee  
Lamaze International  
MomsRising  
National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy: Research,  
Education, and Legal  
National Association of Commissions for Women  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition  
National WIC Association  
National Women's Law Center  
Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
United States Lactation Consultant Association  
Wellstart International

**State-Based Organizations:**

Arkansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware  
Breastfeeding Hawaii  
Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates  
District of Columbia Breastfeeding Coalition  
Florida Breastfeeding Coalition  
Iowa Breastfeeding Coalition  
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition  
Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition  
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition  
New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force  
Ohio Breastfeeding Alliance  
Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition  
Rhode Island Breastfeeding Coalition  
South Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition  
Texas Breastfeeding Coalition

**Local/Community-Based Organizations:**

Breastfeed LA: the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater  
Los Angeles  
Chicago Region Breastfeeding Task Force