

October 21, 2019

Subcommittee Chairwoman Bonamici and Ranking Member Comer
Civil Rights and Human Services Subcommittee
House Education and Labor Committee
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 1975)

Dear Chairwoman Bonamici and Ranking Member Comer:

As organizations that represent health care providers and public health professionals who strive to improve the health of women and babies across the country, we urge you to support the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 2694). This bill is critically important because no one should have to choose between having a healthy pregnancy and a paycheck.

Three-quarters of women will be pregnant and employed at some point in their lives. Most pregnant people can expect a normal pregnancy and healthy birth. However, some pregnant women will need to make minor adjustments in their work activities, as recommended by their health care providers, in order to sustain a healthy pregnancy. These medically necessary accommodations can include allowing frequent bathroom breaks, opportunities to stay hydrated, lifting restrictions, or access to a chair or stool to decrease time spent standing.

Unfortunately, too many pregnant workers face barriers to incorporating even these small changes to their workdays, changes that would help safeguard a healthy pregnancy or prevent harm to a higher-risk pregnancy. They are denied simple, no-cost or low-cost, temporary adjustments in their work settings or activities and instead risk being fired or forced to take unpaid leave. When that happens, the impact on both mother and baby may be long-lasting and severe. One of the main predictors of a healthy pregnancy is early and consistent prenatal care. Loss of employment and health benefits impact family resources, threatening the ability to access vital health care when a woman needs it the most.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act is a measured approach to a serious problem. Modeled after the Americans with Disabilities Act, the bill would require employers to provide reasonable, temporary workplace accommodations to pregnant workers as long as the accommodation does not impose an undue hardship on the employer.

As public health professionals and health care providers, we understand the importance of reasonable workplace accommodations to ensure that women can continue to care for their families and have safe and healthy pregnancies. As such, we pledge our support for the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and urge you to cosponsor this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Public Health Association
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
Physicians for Reproductive Health

CC: Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx