



PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

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House Expands Discrimination Protections for Pregnant, Nursing Mothers

Bills grant pregnant employees and recent mothers reasonable accommodations

SALEM – Bipartisan legislation to provide pregnant and nursing mothers with added employment protections unanimously passed the Oregon House of Representatives today.

The legislation, championed by Rep. Karin Power (D-Milwaukie), clarifies protections for job applicants and workers who are pregnant, and ensures all Oregon employees are given needed rest periods to pump breast milk or breastfeed during a child’s first 18 months.

“Having a child should not unfairly disadvantage any Oregonian,” Rep. Power said. “These two bills ensure that women are not having to make an unacceptable choice: whether to protect the health of her pregnancy, feed their babies, or choose her financial security.”

[House Bill 2341](#) makes it an unlawful employment practice for an employer to deny employment opportunities, fail to make reasonable accommodations, or take certain actions because of the known limitations of an employee or applicant related to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

“Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have already stepped up and passed laws with bipartisan support to explicitly grant pregnant employees the right to reasonable accommodations at work,” Rep. Power added. “This legislation can clarify, strengthen and affirm protections for pregnant employees.”

The legislation conforms the new pregnancy accommodations process and the resulting enforcement to mirror the same process that already exists for disability accommodations in state statute.

[House Bill 2593](#) requires all employers to provide reasonable rest periods for employees to pump breast milk or breast feed as often and as long as individually necessary for the child’s first 18 months.

“Given the immense health benefits of human milk, barriers to breastfeeding in the workplace can be harmful to both mothers and babies,” said Rep. Rachel Prusak (D-West Linn), a sponsor of the bill. “Barriers in the workplace lead to higher rates of infection and illness to the baby, increased stress on the mother, decreased worker productivity, and an increase in the number of

other negative social indicators. This legislation is an important step in ensuring working mothers are given the support they need for their health and the health of their child.”

Both bills further the work of the Oregon House Democrats to advocate for working Oregonians with policies that level the playing field, protect workers' right to unionize and bargain collectively, support working families, and ensure a healthy, job-ready workforce.

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