

August 16, 2012

Dear Congress:

Re: Business Support for the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce is the leading advocate on women's economic issues. Our members - both business owners and careerists respect the needs of women to support themselves and their families. Today, more than ever, it is important that women workers have work environments where they can remain productive and earning income for their families. Because of this, we support the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

Today's businesses depend on women workers, who make up half the workforce. Employment practices that enable businesses to attract, recruit and retain women workers, including through pregnancy, are critical to a productive American economy.

Pregnant workers are very frequently able to work throughout their pregnancies without any changes in their job duties or responsibilities. Some pregnant workers, however, need a reasonable accommodation to continue working throughout pregnancy. This is particularly true for workers in physically demanding jobs. Examples of such accommodations include bathroom breaks, water breaks or food breaks; a stool to sit; or assignment to an available light duty position for which the worker is qualified.

In our businesses we routinely make these sorts of accommodations available to pregnant employees. Providing accommodations to pregnant workers benefits our businesses by:

- Reducing turnover costs and improving the retention of pregnant employees
- Increasing employee productivity, engagement and morale
- Reducing litigation costs associated with defending discrimination claims brought by pregnant workers.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would make clear that employers must provide reasonable accommodations for pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, just as they do for disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, except in those instances when providing accommodations would impose an undue hardship on the employer.

Because "reasonable accommodation" has the same meaning in the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act as it does in the Americans with Disabilities Act, the requirement is already familiar to employers. Employers' success accommodating people with disabilities gives us confidence that pregnancy, which is only a temporary condition, can also be successfully accommodated by employers when such accommodations do not pose an undue hardship.

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce supports the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, which would ensure that pregnant workers are treated consistently with employees with disabilities and promote the retention of women in the workforce.

Sincerely,



Margot Dorfman, CEO
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce