

Labor and Public Employees Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1030

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING BREASTFEEDING IN THE WORKPLACE.

Vote Date: 3/13/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/27/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Labor & Public Employees Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The reason for this bill is to ensure that workers who need to breastfeed are provided with appropriate time and facilities to do so as needed. This would align Connecticut's statutes with federal law and expand upon previous efforts to support women who need to express milk in the workplace.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None provided.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity: Supports the bill. States the significant health benefits of breastmilk to both infants and mothers. It is widely recommended by experts for optimal infant nutrition, adding that nursing needs can vary significantly, and standard break times do not work for many women. States that many women in minority communities face challenges with breastfeeding and pumping while having to return to work earlier for economic reasons. States investing in breastfeeding support at work yields significant economic and public health benefits, including reduced healthcare costs, lower absenteeism rates, and improved employee morale and retention. States the bill is necessary because 75% of women with infants participate in the labor market and will help to rectify inequities and lack of workplace support by ensuring that all Connecticut workers have reasonable break times and access to private, non-bathroom spaces, in accordance with federal law, and provisions for safe storage of breastmilk.

Ed Hawthorne, President Connecticut AFL-CIO: Supports the bill. States the bill would require an employer to provide reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for a nursing child, adding the health benefits of doing so for the baby. Adding the bill would help nursing mothers return to work after giving birth and gives them a more manageable opportunity to balance their life, stating the bill is a win-win for employers and employees.

Ray Rossomando, Director of Policy, Research, and Government Relations of CEA: Supports the bill. States thanks to the committee for the work it has done over the years to provide more sensible policies that help women balance their careers with motherhood. Adding Passage of PA 21-27 was a great step forward in supporting mothers in the workplace which they supported while pointing out the unique circumstances faced by mothers of infants who teach in our schools, with a survey of our members at the time indicated that finding a suitable place and time to express milk was difficult. We have also advocated that the language clearly enables employees the time needed to express milk multiple times in their workday, stating the difficulty teachers have doing this given the unique nature of school scheduling. States they believe that the proposed language addresses the raised concerns the union has had.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut: Supports the bill. States that supporting breastfeeding parents helps all people in Connecticut to continue to participate fully in society, we all deserve the liberty to exist in the public world. Adding that by aligning state law with federal law and strengthening workplace protections, this bill advances gender, racial, and economic justice, recognizing that breastfeeding parents should not have to choose between their livelihoods and feeding their children. Adding numerous barriers still exist to breastfeeding, particularly for low-wage workers and Black and Latine people and that requiring employers to provide reasonable break time for employees to express breast milk or breastfeed as needed, Connecticut would take a critical step toward workplace fairness and economic equity. States the bill will make it easier for breastfeeding parents to work, feed their baby, and exercise their reproductive liberty without being subjected to the whims or denials of their employers.

Tanya Hughes, Executive Director of State of Connecticut Commission of Human Rights: Supports the bill. Stating the bill provides important clarification that an employee must have the opportunity to use break time to express breastmilk at the time that it is needed. Stating The bill puts Connecticut more in line with federal law under the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) and provides the additional layer of protection under state law in case the federal law changes. Adding The Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act requires that Connecticut employers provide a reasonable accommodation to employees that are pregnant or lactating which CHRO has provided guidance on. Pregnant and lactating employees face many barriers in the workplace and every step should be taken to support an inclusive and supportive working environment.

Jacqueline Anonymous: Supports the bill. States she is a working mother of two boys and worked while nursing pumping until they were both a year old. States that her supervisor was understanding but her workplace did the bare minimum, sometimes having to walk 10 minutes to the pumping room, which was sometimes occupied by another mom, hopes this bill will add more flexibility for mothers when their bodies require them to, which can mean

having to pump every 2-3 hours to maintain supply which doesn't fit neatly into a work schedule.

Chad Cardillo, Teacher at Maloney High School Meriden & Secondary Schools Vice President of the Meriden Federation of Teachers: Supports the bill. States support of this bill comes from helping a former teacher in her struggle to receive proper accommodations, the teacher attempted to do everything right to work with her supervisors to find a schedule to pump that aligned with her needs. Adding she was provided with roadblocks and mixed communication that stemmed from misinterpretations of the federal PUMP Act of 2023 and the language of Connecticut's statutes. Stating this teacher left the district due in part to the frustrations of not having clear day to day access to her needs, and that mothers not getting what they need has led to some wearing portable pumps under their clothes or taking unpaid time off out of fear of reprisal for asking for their legal right. States this bill is an issue of fundamental respect for mothers returning to the workplace, and that many have seen current federal law not fully realized in the workplace. Adding that if Connecticut is to remain a leader of personal family and medical planning this bill should pass.

Mary Lee A. Kiernan, President & CEO YWCA GREENWICH: Supports the bill States the bill is important to YWCA Greenwich's mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. Adding the bill aligns federal and state law regarding break periods for breastfeeding during the workday, allowing employees in the workplace to take breaks for breastfeeding and ensures they are accommodated in their needs creating a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable environment for parents breastfeeding. Research suggests that promoting breastfeeding in the workplace is most effective when there is enough time and space to support women it, there is ample research demonstrating that enhanced promotion of breastfeeding in the workplace leads to more equitable and inclusive workplace environments by offering women designated spaces and ample amount of time to breastfeed.

Sara Moeller: Supports the bill. Stating the bill will strengthen current protections for breastfeeding employees by making it clear they can take the time they need to express milk or breastfeed each time they have the need to do so during the workday. Adding breastfeeding employees should not have to choose between their jobs and their health or their child's well-being, and regularly expressing milk is essential for maintaining milk supply and preventing health complications. States support breastfeeding employees is not just a workplace issue, it's a public health priority, urges support of bill.

Cathleen Larsen, Teacher Meriden Board of Education: Supports the bill. States they feel it is imperative that all women who wish to breastfeed their children feel that they are safe and accommodated in their workplace when they return to work from giving birth. All women are different and will be on different schedules when they will need access to an area for pumping at work and aligning state and federal guidelines to allow them to pump when needed as dictated by their body.

Michelle Noehren: Supports the bill. States the bill will strengthen current protections for breastfeeding employees by making it clear they can take the time they need to express milk or breastfeed each time they have the need to do so during the workday, and that breastfeeding employees should not have to choose between their jobs and their health or

their child's well-being. Adding that regularly expressing milk is essential for maintaining milk supply and preventing health complications, A policy that guarantees breaks as needed ensures that working parents can provide for their families without unnecessary barriers, this is not just a workplace issue, it's a public health priority.

Stephanie Timek, 3rd grade teacher Meriden: Supports the bill. States her child was born in the Fall of 2022, then states personal experience from her return to school in January 2023, when her admin was not helpful with providing enough time to pump when her body needed to, and that meant she had to wake up throughout the night to make sure she had enough to send to daycare with her child. Adding she was hopeful when the new national law went into effect in April 2023 allowing "reasonable break time" to pump at work, yet the admin still saying that they would not provide coverage, offering no immediate help, adding that with the help of the union, she was ultimately provided coverage beginning in April to be able to pump at more reasonably spread out times throughout the school day. Stating that not all moms have this support and that this bill should pass so a mother's choice to breastfeed will not be made for them

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Ashley Brooksbank, Teacher at Ridgefield High School: Opposes the bill. States she is a new mom that has been navigating pumping at work and was the first woman in her workplace to do so under the Federal PUMP Act. States that while she appreciates the bill's intent it appears to offer fewer protections and less flexibility than Federal law. Stating that it seems to restrict protected pumping time to specific breaks or meal periods, which is not frequent enough, as sometimes mothers need to pump every couple of hours. Adding that the bill is not strict enough in enforcing a pump room in the workplace stating it is less than the federal standard, adding support for the requirement of refrigeration but that it is less important than a strict pump room requirement. Urges the committee to revise the bill to mandate flexible break times and unambiguous, accessible lactation spaces, which is a matter of equity, health and well-being of both employees and their children.

Reported by: Ian Graves

Date: 3/26/2025