



CONNECTICUT

Breastfeeding Coalition

**TESTIMONY TO THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE IN FAVOR OF PROPOSED H.B. 5746
An Act Concerning a Task Force on Childhood Obesity**

February 27, 2013

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Proposed Bill No. 5746, AN ACT CONCERNING A TASK FORCE ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY. The 2012 report published by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) titled, *Overweight and Obesity Among Kindergarten and Third Grade Children in Connecticut*, found that more than one third (33.6%) of children in a representative sample of third-graders are either overweight or obese. As stated in the conclusion to the report, “Children who are already overweight or obese early in life have increased risk of developing early and severe chronic disabilities.” The stunning findings of this report and their implications for the future health of Connecticut’s children provide ample evidence of the need for a task force to develop a statewide plan concerning childhood obesity. The state of Connecticut has engaged in a number of significant efforts to stem the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity. Establishment of the proposed task force and development of a strategic plan would enable the state to coordinate and leverage resources to make necessary changes in policy and environment through engagement with the public and a wide variety of partners. On that note, the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition (CBC) has collaborated with DPH and other state agencies on a number of initiatives aimed at improving statewide breastfeeding rates. It is well documented that infants who are not breastfed are at increased risk for major chronic diseases and conditions, including childhood obesity. A Connecticut Task Force on Childhood Obesity has the potential to address the remaining barriers to achieving optimal breastfeeding rates, as well as the host of other issues contributing to the unacceptably high rates of overweight and obesity among Connecticut’s children.

Respectfully submitted,

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