

House Bill No. 6932: An Act Concerning Paid Family Medical Leave

Dear Committee members,

In my work with expectant and postpartum mothers I have seen time and again the additional stress and anxiety created by the financial pressures to return to work before the mother is physically and emotionally ready, sometimes even before the baby is 8 weeks old. Babies of that age are feeding every 2-3 hours, interrupting parents' sleep and requiring constant care day and night. The first 12 weeks of a baby's life is the most emotionally demanding and tremendous stress is created when parents are forced to choose between trusting that their babies' immediate needs will be met and the reality they must keep their jobs to continue to meet their families' needs.

When a mother is breastfeeding, they often must wean prematurely so that they can do their work, which creates additional stress and anxiety. While there are statutes in place protecting breastfeeding, the reality is that the additional stress placed on mothers to continue while separated from their babies make it unfeasible.

Many women who suffer from anxiety and depression would be able to mother confidently and with joy if they were assured of the time to meet their infants' needs during "the fourth trimester". If families were given more support, minimally the opportunity to keep their jobs and pay their bills, during the postpartum period, not only would we see less anxiety and depression, we would see fewer problems with those babies and families as they grow and develop.

Thank you for your time,

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