

I am writing to you as the Family Advocacy Coordinator of the University of Connecticut's graduate English program. My co-chair and I would like to express our support for House Bill 5535 and its intended purpose of requiring changing tables in newly constructed or renovated restaurants bathrooms.

While House Bill 5535 is geared toward public spaces, specifically restaurants, we believe it is an important first step in recognizing the needs of parents. Many times when my daughter was an infant I had to change her on a bathroom floor, a dangerous and unsanitary option. Not only is the lack of changing tables, lactation stations, or other reasonable accommodations for parents a serious issue for the health and welfare of Connecticut's children, it sends a certain message to parents that they are not welcome in public spaces. The cost of a wall-mounted changing table is around \$200. Connecticut businesses can be assured a return on this investment by creating a welcoming atmosphere for parents who will notice, remember, and patronize places that make an effort at accommodation.

As you may be aware, the University of Connecticut does not prioritize changing tables for students, faculty, or staff use. If our children are on campus with us for any period of time, we often use desks or the floor to change them. There is one changing table in the women's restroom in the basement of the library, but it is unavailable to fathers. Therefore we encourage and applaud your attempts to provide necessary hygienic access to parents of both genders in public spaces.

Thank you again,
Sara Austin and Rachel Nolan
Family Advocacy Chairs
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