



**Testimony to the Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee regarding House Bill 7022
An Act to Exempt Breastfeeding Equipment and Supplies for the Sales and Use of Taxes
March 1, 2019**

Dear members of the Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share the following testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition in favor An Act to Exempt Breastfeeding Equipment and Supplies for the Sales and Use of Taxes. I support this proposed legislation because manual and electric breast pumps as well as breastmilk storage containers, storage bags, breast shields, valves and membranes, power adapter/battery pack, flanges, tubing, pump bag, bottle cooler bag, and hands-free bra to pump in should all be exempt from sales and use taxes in Connecticut.

The Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition is a nonprofit organization whose mission is *to improve Connecticut's health by working collaboratively to protect, promote and support breastfeeding*. We work to assure access to lactation care and services, promote breastfeeding as a normal and preferred method of feeding, and to protect, promote and support breastfeeding mothers. This includes, but is not limited to, providing expertise and support of education, evidence-based best practices, and legislation.

In Connecticut, several maternal and infant products, including formula, diapers, feminine hygiene products, are tax-exempt. However, none any of the aforementioned items (e.g., breast pumps, breastmilk storage containers, breast shields) that relate specifically to breastfeeding receive this cost-saving benefit. This discrepancy disproportionately affects families who are choosing the best first food for their babies. Breastfeeding has been associated with improved health and lower health care costs (family and societal) resulting from fewer physician visits, hospitalization stays, prescriptions, and other illnesses and diseases.

The cost-savings of tax-exempt breastfeeding equipment and supplies will go a long way to further promote, support and protect breastfeeding in Connecticut. **Providing tax exempt breastfeeding equipment and supplies can result in increased breastfeeding rates, infant growth rates, lower infant morbidity and mortality rates, reduced health disparities, and cost-savings.**

The Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition is willing to lend its expertise to working with the Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele L. Vancour, PhD, MPH
Co-Chair, Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition
mvancour@breastfeedingct.org
www.breastfeedingct.org