

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

H.B. 5109: *An Act Exempting Breastfeeding Supplies from the Sales and Use Taxes*
Public Testimony of the CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide nonprofit that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For forty-six years, CWEALF has been a leading advocate for policy solutions to enhance women's economic security and combat the gender wage gap.

CWEALF urges the committee to support H.B. 5109: *An Act Exempting Breastfeeding Supplies from the Sales and Use Taxes*.

The health benefits of breastfeeding are incredibly well-researched. Breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life is essential to achieve optimal growth and also protects infants from childhood illnesses. Breast milk produces a significant source of energy for babies who are 6 months to 23 months old.¹ Breastfeeding also generates numerous benefits to mothers, including improved short-term health outcomes and a lower risk for developing future diseases. Breastfeeding can also reduce the risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and type 2 diabetes.²

Despite the health benefits breastfeeding provides a mother and child, supplies needed to breastfeed are often unaffordable. The price of breast pumps ranges from \$40 to \$185 for single battery-operated pumps. The price for double pumps can cost anywhere from \$60 to \$3,500.³ These prices do not include additional expenses for supplies, such as, storage for breast milk or nursing pads.

Exemption of breastfeeding supplies from sales tax will alleviate at least some of the costs associated with these products and will benefit women and their families, especially those who are low-income, throughout the state of Connecticut. House Bill No. 5109 also continues our state's recognition and repeal of certain sales taxes that directly impact women. In 2016, the General Assembly removed the sales tax on menstrual hygiene products and diapers. CWEALF urges the committee to support H.B. 5109.

¹ <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/breastfeeding/en/>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3508512/>

³ <https://children.costhelper.com/breast-pump.html>