



February 27, 2020

The Honorable John W. Fonfara, Chair
The Honorable Jason Rojas, Chair
Joint Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding
Connecticut General Assembly
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Support for HB 5109 (An act exempting breastfeeding supplies from the sales and use taxes)

Dear Co-Chairs Fonfara and Rojas:

I am submitting this written testimony **in support of HB 5109, which would exempt breastfeeding supplies from the sales and use tax.** Exempting breastfeeding supplies from sales and use tax will improve moms' access to breastfeeding in the state.

Parity for Pumps is a national coalition of breast pump manufacturers and suppliers who, on behalf of mothers and moms-to-be, are working to end the unfair sales tax treatment of breast pumps and breastfeeding supplies across the country. I serve as the executive director for the coalition.

Infant formula is appropriately exempt from sales and use tax in nearly every state, but in many states, including Connecticut, breastfeeding supplies are subject to tax. Moms shouldn't have to pay tax to feed their babies, no matter how they choose to do so. **Breast pumps are basic necessities for nursing mothers, and taxing them limits access to breastfeeding by making the product more expensive.** Parity for Pumps supports any state action to end the tax disparity between infant formula and breastfeeding supplies.

Regardless of how mothers obtain a breast pump — whether it be via insurance, Medicaid, or by purchasing it out of pocket — taxing pumps makes them more expensive, effectively limiting access to breastfeeding. Eliminating this tax is one step states can take to improve access to breastfeeding for women of all socioeconomic statuses, and it's a solution that's both simple and cost-effective.

Connecticut can become a national leader on this important issue. New Jersey acted to eliminate this punitive tax on nursing mothers in 2017, and Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, and Oklahoma also fully exempt breast pumps from sales tax. California, Illinois, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Washington are all considering a similar exemption this year. HB 5109 is common sense legislation that will eliminate the unfair tax treatment breastfeeding mothers face in Connecticut.

Thank you for your attention on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Liz Malm
Parity for Pumps