



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 5158, An Act Concerning
Breastfeeding in the Workplace**

Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, Ranking Member Sampson, Ranking Member Arora, and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Kelly McConney Moore, and I am the interim senior policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 5158, An Act Concerning Breastfeeding in the Workplace.

We strongly encourage the committee to support House Bill 5158. Connecticut has done the right thing for working parents who breastfeed by clearly requiring employers to support breastfeeding in the workplace. This bill strengthens those requirements by clarifying that the pumping space for expressing breastmilk, which employers are already required to provide, must include (unless there is an undue hardship) privacy, access to cold storage, and access to an electrical outlet. These standards strongly support breastfeeding parents and make it more likely that parents can continue in their preferred method of feeding their children, including with breastmilk.¹ The bill would be strengthened further by removing the gendered pronouns and replacing them with gender-neutral pronouns, since nonbinary people and trans men, in addition to women, breastfeed.

¹ Parents who are supported in expressing breast milk at work are more likely to continue breastfeeding for the duration of their choice and are more likely to express job satisfaction. Carissa M. Rocheleau, Albeliz Santiago-Colon, and Heidi Hudson, "Promoting Worker Well-Being through Maternal and Child Health: Breastfeeding Accommodations in the Workplace." Centers for Disease Control NIOSH Science Blog (Feb. 11, 2019), *available at* <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2019/02/11/breastfeeding-work/>.

Supporting breastfeeding parents helps all people in Connecticut to continue to participate fully in society. We all deserve the liberty to exist in the public world, no matter our circumstances – and sometimes those circumstances include feeding a baby breastmilk. By promoting this right in the workplace, we are also promoting economic security for breastfeeding parents – women, trans men, and nonbinary people – all of whom are underpaid relative to cisgender men.² Protecting the right to breastfeed is a fundamental reproductive decision necessary for reproductive justice. How a person feeds their baby is a critical and personal decision about their body and family that should not be up to an employer. The right to breastfeed is not worth much if a person is prevented, by their lived reality, from exercising it. Numerous barriers still exist to breastfeeding, particularly for low-wage people and people of color.³ By creating and enforcing robust requirements for employers whose employees want to express breastmilk at work, Connecticut would further gender, economic, racial, and reproductive justice.

The ACLU-CT thus supports House Bill 5158, An Act Concerning Breastfeeding in the Workplace, and urges the inclusion of gender-neutral pronouns in this bill. House Bill 5158 will make it easier for breastfeeding parents to work, feed their baby, and exercise their reproductive liberty as they see fit, rather than subjecting them to the whims or denials of their employers. We urge this Committee to support House Bill 5158 with gender-neutral language.

² See Crosby Burns, “The Gay and Transgender Wage Gap.” Center for American Progress (Apr. 16, 2012), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/news/2012/04/16/11494/the-gay-and-transgender-wage-gap/>; see also “The Gender Pay Gap – Myth vs. Fact.” National Organization for Women, available at <https://now.org/resource/the-gender-pay-gap-myth-vs-fact/>.

³ Katy B. Kozhimannil, Judy Jou, Dwenda K. Gjerdingen, and Patricia M. McGovern, “Access to Workplace Accommodations to Support Breastfeeding after Passage of the Affordable Care Act.” 26 Women’s Health Issues Journal 1 at 7 (2016), available at [https://www.whijournal.com/article/S1049-3867\(15\)00117-6/pdf](https://www.whijournal.com/article/S1049-3867(15)00117-6/pdf).