

Adams Celebrates House Passage of PUMP For Nursing Mothers Act



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Adams, Maloney, Congressional Maternity Care Caucus, & Black Maternal Health Caucus Celebrate House Passage of PUMP For Nursing Mothers Act

Bipartisan Bill to Ensure Nursing Rights for Working Moms

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 25, 2021) — In a bipartisan vote on Friday, the House of Representatives passed the ***Providing Urgent Maternal Protections (PUMP) for Nursing Mothers Act***, legislation introduced by **Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney’s (NY-12)**. The bill was introduced [earlier this year](#) with the original support of **Congresswoman Alma Adams (NC-12)** and **Congresswoman Lauren Underwood (IL-14)**, co-chairs of the Black Maternal Health Caucus. The bill was also originally supported by **Congresswomen Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA-03)** and **Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-40)**, co-chairs of the Congressional Maternity Care Caucus. The legislation will ensure that all nursing mothers have protections in the workplace by expanding them to nearly 9 million employees not currently covered by existing law. Additionally, all nursing families in the United States will benefit from the other aspects of this legislation -- enforcement, extending protections to last for two years, and covering workers in the case of adoption, surrogacy, and infant loss.

“In our country, mothers often have to choose between providing for their families or nursing their babies,” **said Rep. Adams**. “The PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act ensures that millions of working mothers have the access and protections they need to nurse for as long as they choose to do so. Every major medical authority strongly encourages nursing for at least the first year of life, as it provides significant health and nutritional benefits to both the mother and infant. By closing an unintended loophole, the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act provides protection and support to an additional 9 million working mothers who have been forced to choose between nursing and earning a paycheck. Nursing mothers should not be punished for making the best choices for their health, and the health of their children.”

“When I was pregnant with my first child, I was told there was no such thing as maternity leave where I was employed. While we’ve come a long way since then, new parents still face too many difficulties in the workplace. Those difficulties should not include breastfeeding,” **said Rep. Maloney**. “For the health and safety of mothers and their babies, all working moms who want to breastfeed must have the time and space to pump breastmilk. These employees and their families suffer when these basic rights aren’t met. Without these protections, nursing mothers face serious health consequences, including risk of painful illness and infection, diminished milk supply, and the inability to continue breastfeeding. All working moms should be guaranteed the workplace protections to breastfeed if they want to, and no new mother should be forced to choose between breastfeeding and earning a paycheck.”

“As a mom of three young kids, I understand the challenges faced by nursing moms who also hold jobs.,” **said Rep. Herrera Beutler**. “Making sure moms can pump at work promotes healthier families, and it’s also important to help businesses recruit and retain the workforces they need. That’s why I’m pleased the House approved this business-friendly, bipartisan legislation – endorsed by leading business associations like the U.S. Chamber of Congress and the National Retail Federation – that simply provides moms with reasonable opportunities to pump in their workplace. I’m proud to have worked with businesses, health care stakeholders, and parents in successfully leading this legislation that supports moms in Southwest Washington who are providing for their family’s health and financial security.”

“As Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Maternity Caucus, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act, a commonsense law to protect breastfeeding mothers in the workplace,” **said Rep. Roybal-Allard**. “Research clearly shows that without protections and access to appropriate and necessary accommodations, breastfeeding employees

have increased risk of painful illness and infection, diminished milk supply, and are more likely to stop breastfeeding early. This bill will help ensure that new mothers in certain professions such as teaching, nursing, software engineering and other salaried positions have the same breastfeeding protections guaranteed to other workers by the 2010 Break Time Law. I thank my colleague, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, for her decades of leadership in protecting and promoting breastfeeding rights for working moms nationwide and I hope to see swift passage of this important legislation.”

“Every parent deserves the opportunity to choose to breastfeed, and I’m proud to sponsor legislation that would remove barriers to breastfeeding for parents as they return to workforce,” **said Rep. Underwood.** “As a nurse, I know the health benefits of breastfeeding are clear, and all breastfeeding employees should be provided the time and space they need to safely and privately pump at work,” said Representative Lauren Underwood. “I urge the Senate to send this bill to the President’s desk urgently. It’s past time to close this loophole and ensure returning to work is not a barrier to breastfeeding.”

“Through the Break Time for Nursing Mothers Law, we have ten years of data illustrating that early coordination and communication makes it easy for employers to anticipate and accommodate the needs of lactating employees. We are thankful for Congressional champions on both sides of the aisle coming together to move this critical legislation forward. It unequivocally demonstrates that breastfeeding is a bipartisan public health imperative,” **says Nikia Sankofa, Executive Director of the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee.** “We just made history together! The lactation field’s dedication to identifying and advancing a bipartisan solution that meets the needs of parents, babies, *and* employers is a testament to what we can accomplish together.”

“Today, the US House of Representatives addressed the critical needs of nursing workers by passing the bipartisan PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act (H.R. 3110),” **said Vania Leveille, Senior Legislative Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union.** “Employers in every industry should have policies in place to accommodate the needs of pregnant and breastfeeding employees but, unfortunately, that is not currently the case. Instead, too many workers are penalized, discriminated against, terminated, or left without options when they try to pump breast milk at work. The PUMP Act ensures that millions of employees left unprotected by current law will have a reasonable amount of time and a private place to pump breast milk at their place of work. This measured and long overdue legislation is essential to safeguard the health and economic security of millions of women and families across the country. We applaud the House for taking action and thank Chairman Scott and Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Jaime Herrera Beutler for their leadership. The Senate should act swiftly to pass this bill.”

“With the House passage of the PUMP Act, Congress just took a critical step forward to combat lactation discrimination in the workplace.” **said Dina Bakst, Co-Founder and Co-President of A Better Balance.** “As we hear all too often, nursing mothers returning to the workplace face unfair treatment because their employers refuse to provide them with time and space to express breast milk. This can lead to devastating health and economic consequences for parents and their children. These challenges face many new nursing workers, but disproportionately low-wage working mothers of color. The PUMP Act will close gaps in our nation’s labor laws that have excluded millions of workers and finally guarantee them fair treatment. We thank Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Scott, and Congresswomen Maloney and Herrera-Beutler for their leadership on this critical legislation and urge the Senate to pass the bill without delay.”

“Today’s House vote to pass the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act represents an important step in fixing broken policies that force women to choose between their jobs and their family’s well-being,” **said Liz Morris, Deputy Director of the Center for WorkLife Law.** “As detailed in our report, *Exposed: Discrimination Against Breastfeeding Workers*, nearly 2/3 of breastfeeding discrimination cases end in job loss; something we simply cannot afford during the pandemic as millions of women have been forced to leave the workforce because of their caregiving responsibilities. The PUMP Act is bipartisan legislation that would ensure lactating workers no longer lose their jobs or face serious health consequences because they lack basic legal rights.”

“Common-sense reforms can ensure that millions of nursing mothers are supported in the workplace, addressing one of the most common barriers to sustained breastfeeding. We are grateful for the bipartisan work, led by Reps. Carolyn Maloney and Jaime Herrera Beutler, to craft sensible solutions that will result in real change for working mothers,” **said Rev. Douglas Greenaway, President & CEO of the National WIC Association.** “As the nation’s largest breastfeeding promotion program, WIC providers know that more work needs to be done to address barriers that keep mothers from reaching their breastfeeding goals. With longstanding scientific recommendations urging six months of exclusive breastfeeding as the gold standard of infant nutrition, businesses must be equipped to support employees who need reasonable break time and a private space to pump. The PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act is an important step in supporting working mothers, and we urge the Senate to follow in advancing this critical legislation.”

The PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act is endorsed by over 160 organizations, including those quoted above.

Background

The PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act would strengthen and expand the 2010 Break Time law by:

- Closing the coverage gap. The bill would protect 9 million employees not included in the 2010 Break Time law by extending the law’s protections

to cover categories of employees currently exempted from protections, such as teachers, nurses, and farmworkers.

- Providing employers clarity on when pumping time can be unpaid, as is allowed under current law.
- Ensuring that nursing mothers have access to remedies that are available for other violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The full bill text can be found [here](#) and a fact sheet can be found [here](#).

Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. is serving her fourth full term in Congress. She represents the 12th District of North Carolina, which includes parts of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. In 2018, she introduced the first Black Maternal Health Week resolution with then-Senator **Kamala Harris**. In 2019, she co-founded the Black Maternal Health Caucus with **Rep. Lauren Underwood (IL-14)**. In March 2020, Adams, along with Harris and Underwood, introduced the **Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act** for the first time, and in February 2021 reintroduced an expanded version of the package with **Senator Cory Booker**. Adams is a mother of two and a grandmother of four.

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