

PREGNANCY ACCOMODATIONS in the Workplace



Introduction

Pregnant women in the workplace have the need for temporary, job-related accommodation to maintain a healthy pregnancy. Policies supporting pregnant workers in the workplace are designed to protect women from being pushed to unpaid leave or being fired. **In North Carolina, employers are not required to offer reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers**, putting both workers and their unborn babies at risk.

Women are an essential part of our labor force and mother's' wages are critical to family economic security and keeping families out of poverty.

Many women continue working into their second and third trimesters of pregnancy and return to work within days or weeks of giving birth.

- **85% of women** will be pregnant and employed simultaneously over the course of their lives¹.
- In North Carolina, **62% of pregnant and new moms are in the labor force**².

What are "reasonable accommodations?"

Reasonable accommodations include things like being able to carry a water bottle, having a stool if your job requires long periods of standing, and guaranteeing more frequent breaks. All these minor and temporary accommodations can add up to a big difference in terms of health outcomes.

Why is legislation needed?

Years of litigation have shown us that there is a gap between the Pregnancy Discrimination Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act that does not provide for guaranteed accommodations. These create a gray area for employers and families trying to interpret what is required. North Carolina's anti-discrimination law does not specifically include pregnancy and there are no other protections in North Carolina law.

Pregnancy accommodations promote protective factors that prevent child abuse and neglect.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 1065) will ensure pregnant workers receive *fair treatment at work*. This legislation guarantees pregnant workers the right to receive reasonable accommodations for limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions unless such accommodation would cause undue hardship on the employer.

Pregnancy accommodations have been shown to **improve workplace retention, increase employee productivity, reduce absenteeism, and improve job satisfaction**, in addition to **saving money for employers**. Physically demanding, stressful, or exhausting work increases the risk for preterm birth and low birth weight.

¹ <https://nearlyeducationcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Pregnancy-Accommodations-Fact-Sheet-Feb.-2021.pdf>
² <https://nearlyeducationcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Pregnancy-Accommodations-Fact-Sheet-Feb.-2021.pdf>

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