

AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

September 17, 2020

Dear Representative:

The AFL-CIO urges you to support the Pregnant Worker Fairness Act (H.R. 2694), and to oppose any motion to recommit. This common sense legislation will promote workplace gender equity, healthy pregnancies, and the economic security of pregnant and parenting women and their families. The bill's protections are particularly important now, as all workers struggle to stay healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the last several decades, there has been a dramatic demographic shift in the workforce, with families increasingly depending on women's income. There are more pregnant workers than ever before, and they are working later into their pregnancies. The simple reality is that some of these women—especially those in physically demanding jobs—will have a medical need for a temporary job-related accommodation in order to maintain a healthy pregnancy. This legislation ensures that such accommodation will be provided without any consequential employer-discrimination or retaliation.

In particular, H.R. 2694 will prevent employers from forcing pregnant workers out of their jobs because of pregnancy-related medical needs. Modeled after the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it provides employers and employees with a clear statutory framework to follow. As with the ADA, employers must offer reasonable accommodation for limitations arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, unless such accommodation would pose an undue hardship. The legislation, therefore, ensures that women can continue to work safely while pregnant, rather than be forced to abandon their paid employment--and likely lose their health insurance, as well--because of on-the-job pregnancy-related health hazards.

Too often, employers deny pregnant workers the basic and reasonable accommodations needed for them to continue working safely during their pregnancies to maintain their income and seniority; too often, being pregnant still means losing a job. It should not be too much for employers to allow stools to sit-on, to have water bottles on-hand, and to provide extra restroom breaks. No one should ever be forced to choose between a healthy pregnancy and a paycheck. The AFL-CIO urges you to support the Pregnant Worker Fairness Act (H.R. 2694).

Sincerely,



William Samuel
Director, Government Affairs

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

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