

Lisa Subeck

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Representative Subeck Introduces Legislation to Support Nursing Mothers in the Workplace

MADISON – Today, Representative Subeck (D-Madison), together with Representative Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) and Senator Julie Lassa (D- Stevens Point), introduced LRB-3285 to ensure nursing mothers do not face unnecessary barriers in the workplace. LRB-3285 would bring Wisconsin law in line with federal employment regulations regarding breastfeeding and ensure that women who are taking unpaid break time to breastfeed or express breast milk do not lose eligibility for employer sponsored health insurance.

“New mothers should not have to choose between making the healthy choice of breastfeeding their babies and the ability to provide health care for their families,” said Representative Lisa Subeck. “This bill would update state law and remove a huge barrier for breastfeeding mothers returning to the workforce.”

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for an infant’s first six months, with continued breastfeeding as complementary foods are introduced. However, working mothers are less likely to initiate breastfeeding and are more likely to breastfeed for a shorter length of time than women who don’t have to deal with workplace barriers. In 2010, the federal government updated the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), requiring employers to provide accommodations at the workplace which would enable nursing mothers to breastfeed or express milk at work. This bill codifies these changes at the state level and adds critical protections to ensure nursing mothers are not forced to choose between breastfeeding and health care.

“Recently, a constituent contacted me about the challenges she faced as a nursing mother returning to work. Her employer has made accommodations for her to express breast milk at work and allowed her unpaid breaks to do so. Unfortunately, because these breaks are unpaid, she is now working slightly under the minimum threshold for health insurance eligibility,” said Subeck. “This bill ensures that nursing mothers are able to maintain their health care coverage by counting any unpaid breaks for the purpose of breastfeeding or expressing milk toward any minimum hours required for health care eligibility.”

“No mother should have to choose between making the healthy choice for her baby and providing health care for her family,” said Subeck. “This bill would ensure that no woman would have to choose between breastfeeding and health care.”

A copy of LRB-3285 is attached.

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78TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT