

May 21, 2014

**Michigan House of Representatives Judiciary Committee Chair**

Kevin Cotter

**&**

**Committee Members**

Klint Kesto

Kurt Heise

Joel Johnson

Andrea LaFontaine

Tom Leonard

Martin Howrylak

Phil Cavanagh

Ellen Lipton

Jeff Irwin

Paul Clemente

**Attention:** Angie Lake, Committee Clerk

Please deliver this to Representative Kevin Cotter for the Judiciary Committee Meeting tomorrow, 5/22 (or a future date should the meeting be moved) regarding the right to breastfeed without discrimination.

As a health care provider, mother of 3 breastfed children and a voter in Michigan, I ask for your support in making Michigan a breastfeeding-friendly state which recognizes breastfeeding and human milk as the norm for infant and young child feeding, and ensures that all families live, work, and receive support in a breastfeeding-friendly culture. As a part of this breastfeeding friendly culture it is important that women who choose to breastfeed have the right to feed their children anywhere they have the legal right to be, free from discrimination.

**Why is this important?**

- 1. 45 states and the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands have laws that specifically allow women to breastfeed in any public or private location – Michigan is one of only 5 states that does not.**
- 2. Nationally, Michigan sits in the bottom 25% of states for breastfeeding initiation and duration to 1 year; and Michigan did not meet Healthy People 2010 goals for breastfeeding.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life:
  - The Healthy People 2020 target for breastfeeding at six months is 61%.
  - In Michigan's WIC program, of mothers who start breastfeeding only 17% are breastfeeding at six months.



**IRONMEN HEALTH CENTER**  
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**Boyne City  
Public Schools**

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WELLNESS PROGRAM**  
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**3. Breastfeeding is the economical choice for families and governments.**

- Families can save \$1,200-\$1,500 on formula in the first year of life by choosing to breastfeed.
- Nationally, if 90% of new mothers in the U.S. breastfed exclusively for six months the U.S. would save \$13 billion per year in medical and other expenses. (Source: Pediatrics, 2010).

**4. Numerous studies have shown the tremendous public health benefits of breastfeeding.** Breastfed infants gain the following advantages in life:

- protection from infection and illness;
- lower rates of asthma, SIDS, and obesity;
- and improved emotional and intellectual development.

**5. Breastfeeding saves lives.** More than 900 infant deaths would be prevented each year if 90% of new mothers in the U.S. breastfed exclusively for six months (Source: Pediatrics, 2010).

Please do all you can to pass the legislation supporting a mother's right to breastfeed without discrimination. Of course you are also supporting the best start for your future voters!

Thank you,



Tammy Hickman, BSN, CPNP  
Ironmen Health Center



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