

Legislation Text

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Recognizing August 1-7 as World Breastfeeding Week and the entire month of August as National Breastfeeding Awareness Month in the City of Philadelphia

WHEREAS, Breastmilk is the best food with which to nourish babies in their first six months, and mothers are encouraged to continue breastfeeding at least until their child reaches one year of age; and

WHEREAS, This vital activity protects both mother and child from disease. Breastfed infants have lower risks of asthma, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, ear and respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome, and gastrointestinal infections. Breastfeeding mothers, meanwhile, have lower risks of high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, ovarian cancer, and breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, Despite its clear health benefits, breastfeeding is not practiced at a high rate. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 1 in 4 infants are exclusively breastfed for their first 6 months, with black infants 21% less likely to have ever been breastfed than white infants. These low rates of breastfeeding add upwards of \$3 billion in medical costs for mothers and children; and

WHEREAS, Many mothers stop breastfeeding early, or sooner than planned, due to lack of support. The CDC cites “hospital practices, education and encouragement, policies or supports in the workplace, and access to community supports” as factors that can help determine successful breastfeeding practices; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has long led efforts to support and encourage breastfeeding mothers. Since 1997, it has protected the rights of women to breastfeed outside their homes. City employees have benefited from a Worksite Lactation Support Policy since 2011. Additionally, this Council adopted Bill No. 130922, which made it unlawful for any employer to fire or harass a woman for expressing breast milk during the work day and required employers to provide reasonable accommodation for a woman to express breast milk in the workplace. These protections were signed into law in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Five hospitals in Philadelphia are designated as “Baby-Friendly Facilities” by Baby-Friendly USA, the national authority for the World Health Organization’s and the United Nations Children’s Fund’s Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative to promote and support breastfeeding. These same hospitals are also designated as “Keystone 10” facilities by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, part of an initiative to implement procedures that improve overall breastfeeding care and rates; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia offers many free breastfeeding resources online and in-person at Philadelphia Health Centers. New and expecting mothers are encouraged to learn more at phillylovesbreastfeeding.org or contact organizations like Maternity Care Coalition, which certifies employers and business who support breastfeeding and offers services to pregnant women and new mothers; and

WHEREAS, The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action has designated August 1-7 as World Breastfeeding Week, “a global campaign to raise awareness and galvanize action on themes related to breastfeeding.” Moreover, the United States Breastfeeding Committee has designated August as National Breastfeeding Month;

and

WHEREAS, The City is proud to stand with national and global allies to encourage all mothers to breastfeed their infants, and it thanks all community members and entities that empower mothers to nurture their babies in this vital way; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes August 1-7 as World Breastfeeding Week and the entire month of August as National Breastfeeding Awareness Month in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Maternity Care Coalition, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.