

LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR HB 2284 –BREAST-FEEDING BILL

Dear Honorable State Representative and member of Health & Human Services Committee,

I have been a registered nurse since 1972. I am writing regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, "wherever she has the right to be." Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas and I ask you to vote in favor of HB 2284.

As a mother, I gave birth in 1973 and 1976 and breastfed both of my daughters, even though I was in the minority, as most women were formula feeding during that era. Our youngest daughter was born with a life-threatening heart defect. By nursing her as she recovered from open heart surgery, at age one month, and the months surrounding, I was sure I was doing everything in my power to assist her healing and protect her from communicable diseases.

As a R.N., I have spent the majority of my 33-year nursing career helping pregnant women, new mothers and their babies have the best start possible. This includes an emphasis on education and support for successful breastfeeding during the first few weeks and months of their infant's life. Even with some obstacles that can occasionally present themselves, these mothers are generally willing to try most anything to make breastfeeding a success, in order to give every advantage to their nursing baby and the mother-infant relationship.

Breastfeeding is an important and basic act of nurturing an infant, which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health. This issue of nursing in a public area affects the mothers that I help. Now that I am a grandmother, I have observed with my own two daughters, who have nursed their babies, (and other mothers I give support to) how frustrating and embarrassing it is to be asked to leave a public area while nursing. We Kansans promote public health and should encourage public acceptance of this most basic act of nurturing care that a mother gives her infant. No mother should be made to feel incriminated or socially ostracized for breastfeeding her child.

If I can be of assistance to you as you consider HB 2284, please feel free to phone me at 785-537-1136 or e-mail me karen@burgessheritage.com. I ask for your support of this important bill which will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come. Thank you for considering my position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Karen Meek, R.N.
2408 Hillview Drive
Manhattan, KS 66502
karen@burgessheritage.com

Dear Representative Morrison:

I am a mother and La Leche League leader in Manhattan, KS. I write you to request your support for House Bill 2284 which reaffirms a mother's right to breastfeed her baby "where ever she has the right to be". This is a simple protection of mothers' and babies' needs, one that most states already explicitly protect. I hope Kansas will join the 38 other states with such a law.

Breastfeeding is the natural and most healthy way to feed a baby. Depriving a baby the right to nurse is depriving that baby of the right to eat, and I'm sure you know infants need to eat often! It is unfortunate that mothers sometimes feel they must "hide" while nursing their baby, often in unsanitary places such as restrooms. Mothers have a need to care for their babies and babies have a need to eat. House Bill 2284 supports both of these needs.

I find it refreshing to have a bill that will so simply improve the quality of life of families in Kansas. There is no need for increased taxes or partisan debate! It is a splendid opportunity to support mothers and babies, to support the future of our state. I hope you will support HB 2284 and help move it to the house floor expediently.

Sincerely yours,

Emily Ragan

Dept. of Biochemistry
Kansas State University
785-532-6922
eragan@ksu.edu

Feb. 16, 2005

The Honorable Jim Morrison
State Representative
Kansas House of Representatives
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Morrison

I am Pat Olson from Newton. I am writing regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public "wherever she has the right to be." Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas. I ask you to vote in favor of HB 2284.

Breastfeeding is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health. Many mothers are hesitant to meet their baby's needs because of the fear that someone will say something unkind to them if they nurse in public or that they may even be asked to leave a public place because they are breastfeeding.

It is my hope that this bill will be passed during this session. It would be a shame if even one more mother has to be humiliated by being asked to leave a place she has a right to be just because she is trying to naturally meet the needs of her baby. Babies need to be fed when they are hungry and not when mom can find a "hiding place." I can be reached at 316.283.2755 or patolson@iwichita.com. I ask for your support on this important bill which will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come. Thank you for considering my position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Pat Olson
326 W. Broadway
Newton, KS 67114

Feb. 16, 2005
The Honorable Jim Morrison
State Representative
Kansas House of Representatives

Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Morrison:

I am Lara Williams, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant in Topeka. I am writing on behalf of the Kaw Area Breastfeeding Coalition regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, "where ever she has the right to be". Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas, and the Kaw Area Breastfeeding Coalition is asking you to vote in favor of HB 2284.

The Kaw Area Breastfeeding Coalition is comprised of many local organizations including: St. Francis Health Center, Stormont-Vail HealthCare, K-State Research and Extension: Shawnee County, EFNEP, La Leche League of Topeka, La Leche League of Osage County, Early Headstart, Shawnee County Health Agency, Kansas Children's Service League: Healthy Families and Parents as Teachers.

The coalition members, on a daily basis, actively encourage breastfeeding, which is essential to the physical and emotional health of mother and child. Any genuine promotion of public health should encourage public acceptance of this most basic act of nurturing, and no mother should be made to feel incriminated or socially ostracized for breastfeeding her child. As a coalition, we support HB2284 and we ask for your support as well.

If the coalition can be of assistance to you as you consider HB 2284, please feel free to contact me at 295.5498. Thank you for your time and support of this important bill that will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Lara Williams, IBCLC
4127 NW 70th St.
Topeka, KS 66618

Theresa Weigel, IBCLC
12660 W. Armstrong Rd.
Brookville, KS 67425
785-225-6787
weig@wtciweb.com

February 15, 2005

RE: HB 2284, written testimony

To: Health and Human Services Committee Members

I am testifying in support of HB 2284, protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, wherever she has the right to be. I wish that common sense prevailed and that such legislation were unnecessary. However, it has become apparent that a mother's right to breastfeed her child without question has been lost in the context of our culture's misinterpretation of normal human behavior. I would argue that this legislation could be a first step in providing women and their children an undeniable right with no strings attached. While I am saddened that some would find a nursing mother inappropriate under any circumstances, it is not the responsibility of the mother and child to alter healthful human behavior to accommodate those who are uninformed or without a cultural context for its normality.

While there are many studies to show the healthfulness that breastfeeding provides for both mother and baby, creating legislation that ensures a welcoming environment for mothers who are breastfeeding will have a positive impact on reaching the Breastfeeding Healthy People 2010 goals set by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

I feel that I am in a position to appreciate the necessity of this legislation. Having helped women wanting to learn about nursing their babies for the past 21 years through volunteer work with La Leche League, and supporting families for 10 years as a parent educator for Parents as Teachers, I know first hand the challenges of parents' feeling the social pressure of a "no breastfeeding here" attitude.

For many babies, this means that their health is jeopardized when the benefits of breastfeeding is passed by in order to comply with an inaccurate cultural belief about women and breastfeeding. Mothers also lose health benefits that can result in serious illness.

Please take the responsibility and show courage in passing this bill. It will be a template for others to do the right thing in providing a supportive environment for mothers choosing to nurse their babies. Until the culture can reclaim the understanding of breastfeeding and its importance to the health of our communities, I feel that it is in the best interest of our citizenry to pass HB 2284.

Sincerely,
Theresa J. Weigel

Dear Committee Members:

Being the father of 5 and having a wonderful wife (Florena) who nursed all 5 of our children we request that you support this bill. We feel that young nursing mother have all the support of the entire community as these mothers try to do the best for their children and need not have to worry that some restrictions be placed on them for nursing their children. Thank you for your consideration of this request and thank you for the time to read this letter.

Frank Schneweis
Florena Schneweis
Wichita KS

" Ask and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For the one who seeks, finds. The one who knocks, enters." Matt. 7- VS. 7 & 8 (this is the power of constant prayer)

Feb. 14, 2005
The Honorable Jim Morrison
State Representative
Kansas House of Representatives
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Morrison,
I am Mary Honas of Overland Park, KS. I am writing regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, "where ever she has the right to be". Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas, and I ask you to vote in favor of HB 2284. Breastfeeding is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health. As a La Leche League Leader in Overland Park for over 18 years, I have observed and heard from many mothers who have been asked to leave a public area while nursing. Just this past summer, a woman who lives in Johnson County contacted me. She was the mother of a six month old, exclusively breastfed infant who was asked to leave the pool run by her neighborhood homes association. She contacted me to see if they had a right to ban her and her child from nursing in a shaded area close by while watching her other children in the pool. A law supporting this mother's right to care for her baby would have been a greater help to her than any words of moral support or encouragement I could offer her. Certainly it didn't help her to know that other states have breastfeeding legislation that would have made a difference in her situation. If the state of Kansas is serious about promoting public health, therefore reducing costs for health care, our laws need to support and encourage public acceptance of this basic right, for a mother to nourish and nurture her child in a natural, healthy way. No mother should be made to feel socially ostracized for breastfeeding.

If I can be of assistance to you as you consider HB 2284, please feel free to contact me at (913) 262-7104 or honasbdmj-7@juno.com . I ask for your support of this important bill which will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come. Thank you for considering my position on this issue.

Sincerely,
Mary Honas

7236 Goodman St.
Overland Park, KS 66204

Feb. 13, 2005

The Honorable Jim Morrison
State Representative
Kansas House of Representatives
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Morrison:

My name is Cheryl Peachey Stoner and I live in Hesston, Kansas. I am writing regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, "where ever she has the right to be." Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas, and I ask you to vote in favor of HB 2284.

Breastfeeding is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health. As a La Leche League Leader in Newton, Kansas, I have observed and heard from many mothers how frustrating and embarrassing it is to nurse in public, knowing she may be asked to leave a public area while nursing. The social constraints of our society weigh against the choice of breastfeeding and lead new mothers to opt for formula feeding to avoid embarrassment, social ostracism or criminal prosecution. Any genuine promotion of public health should encourage public acceptance of this most basic act of nurture between mother and her child, and no mother should be made to feel incriminated or socially ostracized for breastfeeding her child.

If I can be of assistance to you as you consider HB 2284, please feel free to contact me via e-mail or at 620-327-4401. I ask for your support of this important bill which will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come. Thank you for considering my position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Cheryl N. Peachey Stoner

9129 W. Dutch Ave.

Hesston KS 67062

Hello All,

I have become aware that there is legislation being considered at the State level, which proposes to advocate for breastfeeding in public. Hoorah! This is wonderful news!

For the reputation of breastfeeding, I liken this time period to that of post-emancipation. Even though equality had been declared, it took a great deal of time for a large part of society to grab on to this idea and make it part of their actions. For many years/decades, until recently, breastfeeding has been frowned upon in the Western World. It has come to light, in the past decade, that, yes, breast milk *is* good for our babies and mothers really *should* breastfeed. It will take time for mothers and nonmothers to readjust their mentalities to the idea that seeing a mother nurse her baby is as natural as watching someone dine in a restaurant, just as it took time for the idea of equality for all to sink in for some.

It was unfortunate that we had to pass very specific laws to ensure equality for all; but we did and we have a more enlightened society as a result. Likewise, it seems to be necessary to pass a law to guarantee the right of a mother to nurse her child without having to go into a dirty toilet to do so.

I am so pleased to hear that this legislation is being considered, and I hope that your Committee will do it's best to promote it. If this legislation fails, our babies will continue to be subject to the whims of opinion in public settings. Our babies should have the same rights to eat anytime, anywhere, as does anyone else.

If you have any doubts about the importance of breastfeeding, here are a couple of links for further information:

<http://www.gnn.tv/H01076>

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/pediatrics;115/2/496>

Thank you for your attention,

Dawn Hawkins

Lawrence, KS

Feb. 14, 2005

The Honorable Jim Morrison
State Representative
Kansas House of Representatives
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Morrison:

I am Pat Olson, Newton. I am writing regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, "wherever she has the right to be." Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas. I ask you to vote in favor of HB 2284.

Breastfeeding is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health. Many mothers are hesitant to meet their baby's needs because of the fear that someone will say something unkind to them if they nurse in public. At times I nursed my children in restrooms when they were babies. I hope that my children and grandchildren will never feel compelled to do that because of fear of being incriminated against or socially ostracized for breastfeeding their children in public.

If I can be of assistance to you as you consider HB 2284, please feel free to contact me at 316.283.2755. I ask for your support of this important bill which will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come. Thank you for considering my position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Pat Olson
326 W. Broadway
Newton, KS 67114

Feb. 14, 2005

The Honorable Jim Morrison
State Representative
Kansas House of Representatives
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Morrison:

My name is Laura McComb from Manhattan. I am writing regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, "where ever she has the right to be". Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas, and I ask you to vote in favor of HB 2284.

Breastfeeding is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health. As a new breastfeeding mother, I feel extremely uncomfortable and self-conscious breastfeeding due to society's ill-natured feelings about women breastfeeding in public. This makes many new mothers choose to bottle-feed instead of breastfeed. I have considered this on occasion in order to avoid embarrassing people that I am with, receiving dirty looks, or being thrown out of establishments. I only want to do what is best for my baby in order to make her healthy and I truly believe that in a modern society like ours, we should support that. I have been told by my pediatrician that third world countries feed their babies better than we do when it comes to breast verses the bottle because they always choose the breast. If it were more accepted and women were praised instead of ridiculed for breastfeeding our babies, our country would be healthier. This would save all of us money spent on healthcare and

later on medicare.

If I can be of assistance to you as you consider HB 2284, please feel free to contact me at (785)565-0539 or ltl_lyd@bearkan.com. I ask for your support of this important bill which will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come. Thank you for considering my position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Laura McComb
1966 Lincoln Dr.
Manhattan, KS 66502

Dear Representatives of the Board-

I feel that it is necessary to address the issue of the House Bill No.2284 regarding breastfeeding. It is important to understand the need for such a bill to be passed based on the abundance of research supporting the positive aspects of breastfeeding and I believe that women and the children should have this right. Please support House Bill No.2284.

Sincerely,
Seanna L. East-RN

Student
(316)945-7378
1343 N. Smith
Wichita, ks 67212

Feb. 15, 2005

The Honorable Jim Morrison

State Representative
Kansas House of Representatives
Topeka, KS 66612
Dear Representative Morrison:

I am Christy Pate, OTR, IBCLC, from Overland Park, KS. I am writing regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, "where ever she has the right to be". Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas, and I ask you to vote in favor of HB 2284.

Breastfeeding is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health. As amn occupational therapist and lactation consultant, I have had the privelege of working with thousands of children. As you may know, becoming a parent can be the most overwhelming task a person ever undertakes. Selecting their baby's nutrition is just one of hundreds of decisions many new parents weigh with their baby's best interest at heart. It is so very sad that we live in a culture which often pushes parents to decide against breastfeeding a baby. This decision may be the right one for many parents, but is it ever the right one if it is made out of fear of embarrassment, social ostracism or criminal prosecution? Any genuine promotion of public health should encourage public acceptance of this most basic act of nurture between mother and her child, and no mother should be made to feel incriminated or socially ostracized for breastfeeding her child.

If I can be of assistance to you as you consider HB 2284, please feel free to contact me at 913-341-3151 or kidmatter@familink.com. I ask for your support of this important bill which will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come. Thank you for considering my position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Christy Pate, OTR, IBCLC
5915 W 100 Terrace
Overladn Park, KS 66207

Feb. 14, 2005

Dear Representative Morrison,
Regarding State House Bill H2284, I support the passage of this bill that

will protect a woman's right to breastfeed in public. I hope that you also will show your support for this bill as breastfeeding is an essential, positive factor in the physical health and emotional connection for both baby and mother. Thank you for your time and support of this important bill.
Sincerely,

Melissa Peat
3833 SW Dukeries Rd.
Topeka, KS 66610

The Honorable Jim Morrison
State Representative
Kansas House of Representatives
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Morrison:

I am Stacy Tidmore, a first-time mother, living in Manhattan, Kansas. I am writing regarding House Bill 2284 concerning the encouragement of breastfeeding and protecting a woman's right to breastfeed in public, "where ever she has the right to be". Kansas is one of only 12 states without breastfeeding legislation. This law is needed in Kansas, and I ask you to vote in favor of HB 2284.

Breastfeeding is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health. I breastfeed my 14 month old son, both at home and in public. It is important to me that we can comfortably and safely nurse wherever we go. Please support the rights of my son and myself to do what simply comes naturally to us, what my pediatrician recommends we do, and what organizations around the world - such as the World Health Organization - support.

If I can be of assistance to you as you consider HB 2284, please feel free to contact me at stidmore@hotmail.com. I ask for your support of this important bill which will have a lasting impact on the health and well being of mothers and babies for generations to come. Thank you for considering my position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Stacy Tidmore, PhD
2120 Fox Meadows
Manhattan, KS 66503