



voices for children

IN NEBRASKA

Telling the whole story.

7521 Main Street, Suite 103
Ralston, Nebraska 68127

(402) 597-3100 P
(402) 597-2705 F

<http://voicesforchildren.com>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eric Nelson
President

Tim Hron, MA, LIMHP
Vice President

Donna Hammack, MSEd
Secretary

Steve Mitchell
Treasurer

David A. Hecker, JD
Advisor

Anne Yu Buettner, MA
Yolanda Chavez Nuncio, MEd
Catherine Damico, JD
Steve Drucker, CPA
Kristen Erickson, CPA
Jeremy Fitzpatrick, JD
Jocelyn Joyce
Lloyd Meyer
Daniel Padilla
Tim Thoreson

Carolyn D. Rooker, MSW
Executive Director

A member of:



Find us on:



February 9, 2015

To: Members of the Business and Labor Committee

From: Aubrey Mancuso, Policy Coordinator

Re: Support for LB 627

Voices for Children supports LB 627 because it ensures that our laws are consistent with the Nebraska values of both family and hard work by ensuring that working women can help maintain the financial security of their families while pregnant. Nebraska has high overall employment rates and high numbers of women in the workforce. Approximately 71 percent of women who give birth in Nebraska in a given year are working.¹

In many cases, women today are the primary earners in their household or significantly contributing to family income. In 2010, about two-thirds of mothers were the primary or co-breadwinners for their family.² When job related accommodations aren't made for pregnancy, it can put families in an economically vulnerable situation at a time when their household expenses are about to increase. According to the USDA, a U.S. family will spend an average of about \$12,000 on a baby during his or her first year of life.³

When a family's financial stability is compromised because of pregnancy, it can increase the likelihood of needing to rely on public assistance programs. This was the case for a Nebraska worker who has given permission for her story to be shared anonymously here today. In 2013, a woman was hired to work for a health care organization in a position that was initially described primarily as an office job with the occasional need to provide assistance to home care workers. She was pregnant at the time she was hired. As her job progressed, her employer asked her to take on home care as her main responsibility, which required more lifting. The lifting gave her ligament pain and cramping. When her doctor instructed her not to lift more than 25 pounds for the remainder of her pregnancy, her employer told her that she was too much of a liability to continue working and forced her onto short-term disability. Eventually, she was left with no pay and no benefits and had to apply for Medicaid to cover health expenses for the rest of her pregnancy and birth.

Many accommodations required for pregnancy are of minimal cost to the employer and since pregnancy is always a temporary condition, there can be benefits to both the employee and employer in being able to retain the worker in the long term. In addition, pregnant workers represent only a small portion of the workforce at any given time and so the impact of making accommodations for this populations are

¹ National Women's Law Center (2015) The Nebraska Pregnant Workers Fairness Bill: Making Room for Pregnancy on the Job

² Center for American Progress (2012) The New Breadwinners: 2010 Update

³ USDA (2012) Expenditures by Family on Children

unlikely to be significant. Pregnant workers comprise only about 1.8% of the overall Nebraska workforce in a given year.⁴

LB 627 is a policy that supports both work and family and we urge the committee to advance this bill. Thank you.

⁴ National Women's Law Center (2013) Pregnant Workers Make up a Small Share of the Workforce and Can Be Readily Accommodated: A State-by-State Analysis