

# CQMC Coalition for Quality Maternity Care

8403 Colesville Rd, Suite 1550 • Silver Spring, MD 20910-6374

November 15, 2011

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
United States Senate  
313 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney  
United States House of Representatives  
2332 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Merkley and Representative Maloney:

On behalf of the Coalition for Quality Maternity Care (CQMC), a coalition of national professional, consumer, and human rights organizations that promote high quality maternity care for all women and newborns, we write to thank you for introducing the Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2011 (S. 1463/H.R. 2758).

Breastfeeding is the optimal method of infant nutrition. Studies indicate that breastfed infants have a decreased incidence or severity of infections, such as gastroenteritis, meningitis and urinary tract infections. Human milk also has potential protective effects against sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), as well as childhood and adult-onset diseases, allergies, and asthma. For women, the benefits of breastfeeding include the reduced risk of osteoporosis, ovarian cancer, breast cancer and rheumatoid arthritis.

The Surgeon General's 2011 *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* identifies returning to work as a significant barrier to breastfeeding success. Your legislation will ensure that more women will have the opportunity to breastfeed their babies after they return to work by: 1.) amending civil rights law to ensure that women cannot be fired or discriminated against in the workplace for expressing milk or breastfeeding during lunch or breaks; and 2.) extending the existing federal provision that ensures women have break time and a private place to pump in the workplace.

Again, CQMC applauds your long-time leadership in the area of women's health and stands ready to help you to achieve the passage of the Breastfeeding Promotion Act. If you wish to draw upon our assistance, please do not hesitate to contact please contact Patrick Cooney at (202) 347-0034.

Sincerely,

American Association of Birth Centers  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
Amnesty International USA  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
Childbirth Connection  
International Center for Traditional Childbearing  
Midwives Alliance of North America  
National Association of Certified Professional Midwives

