

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



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Porter, Linehan lead passage of legislation strengthening workplace protections for pregnant women



State Reps. Robyn Porter, D-New Haven, and Liz Linehan, D-Cheshire, led passage of [House Bill 6668](#), which would amend Connecticut statute to strengthen current protections for pregnant women. The bill, which was unanimously approved in the Labor and Public Employees Committee, passed in the House of Representatives in a 120-30 vote.

While the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 and state law prohibit employees, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth or related health conditions, H.B. 6668 would ensure reasonable accommodations are provided to employees, allowing them to work despite pregnancy limitations.

“No force is more powerful than a working woman. We need to make sure women can have a successful career while balancing a family,” said **Porter**, chairwoman of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. “This bill will strengthen workplace protections for pregnant women to ensure they can have the best of both worlds.”

Despite the protections already in place, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported that during fiscal years 2011 to 2015 about [31,000 pregnancy discrimination cases](#) were filed with the agency. Last year, the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities received more than [70 pregnancy discrimination complaints](#). These claims were made by countless women across the state regardless of their profession, race and ethnicity.

H.B. 6668 was introduced by state Reps. Christine Conley, Liz Linehan, Kelly Luxenberg, Cristin McCarthy Vahey, Caroline Simmons and state Sen. Mae Flexer.

“No woman should face discrimination at work because she chooses to start a family, yet in 2017 the way we treat pregnancy continues to be a barrier to women’s advancement,” **Linehan** said. “It’s not just women who are affected by the loss of wages or missed opportunities – it’s their families, the children they support, and our economy. Workplace protections for pregnant women benefit employers by reducing turnover, increasing employee morale and productivity, and reducing workers’ compensation costs. A strong economy requires the full workforce participation of women, and we all lose when women are left behind or sidelined in the workplace because of a pregnancy.”

Because this bill would make it unlawful to refuse an employee or prospective employee’s request for reasonable accommodations, women will no longer have to choose between pursuing a career and raising a family.

Connecticut would not be the first state in the U.S. to enact stronger protections for women in the workplace. Similar legislation has also been enacted in 14 other states with bipartisan support.

“In many families, women are the breadwinners. Connecticut cannot afford to have women sacrifice their livelihoods,” **Porter** said. “Through this legislation, women will no longer be sidelined for their pregnancy. Rather, they will receive the reasonable accommodations they need to continue working to maintain a stable source of income.”

H.B. 6668 now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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