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House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs  
115 State Street, Room 41  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

To Whom It May Concern:

I understand that you are considering H.808, act relating to accommodations for pregnant employees. I worked in Vermont during my pregnancy in 2013, where I asked for but was not afforded accommodations. I want to take this opportunity to share my story with you as you consider this very important matter and the impact it has on Vermont families.

### Pharmacy

I began working at a pharmacy in Vermont as a Pharmacy Technician in August, 2011. I informed my employer that I was pregnant, very early: when I was one month along, in January, 2013. At that point I had been employed at the pharmacy for one and a half years with no problems or issues.

Everyone in the pharmacy had access to stools already, but no one had much chance to use them because they kept us too busy to sit. I am quite short and the stools they provided were too tall. I asked for a shorter stool, and was refused.

I had severe morning sickness during my pregnancy, and when I went to the restroom to vomit, I was spoken to by the store manager several times for spending too much time off the floor. I then had to vomit into a trash can on the floor, in front of customers. The manager refused to let me go home when I was this sick.

The store has a very strict dress code. The lab coat is the only piece of this that's provided by the company. All employees had to furnish their own pants in a specific color of khaki, a dark navy blue top, and white or black socks. The store provided a catalog to order from, but these items were not paid for by the company, and they didn't offer my size. I had to resort to purchasing my uniform elsewhere. When I was pregnant, and due to my thyroid condition, I gained weight especially rapidly, 30lbs in two weeks. My work clothes didn't fit at all, but I didn't earn much money, and had to wait for another paycheck to afford new clothing. I wore a shirt in a different shade of dark blue until I got paid and could buy larger clothes, and my store manager berated me in front of the rest of the pharmacy staff, customers, and other store employees. I zipped up my lab coat, asked to borrow a navy store vest, but this did not satisfy the manager. One day, a fellow employee offered to go home on her break and loan me compliant clothing in my new size, but the manager wouldn't let her be gone for an extra 15 minutes. The employee was going to bring clothes in my new size for me the next day, and the manager kept scolding me about my top. She confronted me about my clothing at least 8 times in one week. Each time she did this, I

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explained that I would happily comply and purchase new clothes once I got paid, or I would go home, which they wouldn't let me do.

I was asked to unload the delivery truck of pharmaceuticals containing 50-pound boxes, while I was vomiting from morning sickness, and was given the evil eye for asking for help.

I overheard the store manager talking about me, saying that she didn't know whether to believe me or not and thought that I was exaggerating my illness, to one of my co-workers.

There was never a written record of my supposed infractions, as the manager did not write me up, but continued to give verbal warnings.

I ended up quitting the job because it was tremendously stressful to be treated so badly. My family was counting on my paycheck. It was very difficult to lose this income when we were expanding our family. We didn't have enough money for groceries, and we had to borrow money from family just to eat. It put a lot of pressure on my husband.

### Bookstore

When I was 7 months pregnant, I found a job at a bookstore West Lebanon, New Hampshire. They knew I was pregnant when they hired me, and I provided a letter from my doctor with lifting and climbing restrictions. When I was hired, the manager told me I would be trained before I had my son, so I would be ready to go when I came back to work. My understanding was the training would be primarily on the computer or at the register. After a few days of training, I was asked to rearrange shelves, using a ladder to climb to the top shelves, which are about 10 feet off the ground, carrying armfuls of books. I asked for assistance with this task, which not granted. I asked the manager if there was another task I could do instead, they declined. I tried to climb up a couple of times but realized it was too unsafe, as I didn't have very good balance. Another co-worker volunteered to switch jobs with me. I wasn't willing to put my or my child's health in jeopardy. I was forced to quit that job too, as it was clear they wouldn't accommodate my pregnancy for a short time, despite knowing about my restrictions when they hired me.

Thank you for your time,

Sharon Cox