



To: Representative Helen Head and Members of the House Committee and General Housing and Military Affairs

From: Abigail Rogers, Director, Advocacy and Government Affairs,
March of Dimes Northeast

Date: February 16, 2017

Re: H.136 Pregnancy Accommodations

On behalf of the March of Dimes Northeast Region, I would like to express support for [H.136](#) which would require reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers.

The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of women of childbearing age, infants, and children by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. Today, large majorities of women are remaining in the workforce while pregnant and returning to work after having their babies. To protect the health of their pregnancies, some women may need to take certain precautions in the workplace. For instance, pregnant women should wear gloves or a mask if handling chemicals, they should not lift heavy objects, and they should rest periodically if they stand for long periods of time.

While the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related health conditions, H.136 would ensure reasonable accommodations are provided to employees to enable them to continue working despite limitations due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. The law is designed to ensure that these accommodations would not present an undue hardship on the employer. Examples might include providing an employee with a chair, providing assistance with heavy lifting, offering uncompensated break time, or providing temporary job restructuring. The bill will make it unlawful to refuse an employee or prospective employee's request for reasonable accommodations, it would prohibit denying employment opportunities based on the need for a reasonable accommodation, and it would prohibit an employee from being required to take leave if reasonable accommodations can be provided.

As an organization focused on helping women have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies, the March of Dimes Northeast asks for your support of this bill and urges the committee to take it up and pass it. This bill will protect both the health of women's pregnancies and their financial stability by ensuring they can obtain reasonable accommodations in the workplace.