



VRGA Overview

VRGA is the result of the Vermont Retail Association and the Vermont Grocers Association merging in 2014. To date, VRGA consists of about 800 members – ranging from general retail, grocery stores, convenience stores, distributors, producers, and business service members. We are the umbrella association for the Vermont Specialty Food Association, the Vermont Petroleum Association, and the Vermont Alliance of Country Stores. We host several networking events throughout the year to foster networking, and information sharing. We work hard to represent the voice of our collective membership, ensure that they're well-informed to the point where they are in compliance with state laws and regulations, and are aware of cutting edge resources and opportunities in the retail sector.

Pregnancy accommodation rights in the workplace are already covered by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA), the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

Keeping valued employees on the job after they become pregnant is a priority for employers. However, it becomes very difficult for employers to provide the flexibility and accommodations for individual employees when the policies set forth in the workplace are dictated by bright line, one-size-fits-all rules.

As well, H.136 would create an environment where an employee with any condition related to pregnancy could refuse any accommodations to the extent of being relieved of any, or all, of their duties.

Current regulations are broad enough to cover the necessary accommodations for all disabled employees. This bill would put pregnant employees on a completely different level of accommodations than any other employee – creating a dichotomy among employees, which leaves the employer vulnerable to legal implications.

Finally, the Family Medical Leave Act and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, provide exemptions for businesses with 15 or fewer employees. With 96% of businesses in Vermont identified as small businesses, a majority of employers have 5 or fewer employees. Should the committee move this bill, we strongly suggest that an exemption for small employers be added.