



Summer Breastfeeding Advocacy

Hot Times

Hot Topics



Congressional Summer Recess

- Congress takes a summer break from Washington in August, but not from business
- Your US Representatives and Senators are home in their districts with you
- This is a prime time to advocate for breastfeeding and the IBCLC without traveling to Washington



Catch them where you can

- Make an appointment at the district office closest to you
- Find out when he/she is hosting a town hall forum
- See if he/she has open hours around the district
- Invite the official to your USLCA chapter meeting or event



Be prepared

- Being prepared is not just for boy scouts and girl scouts
- Local staff may not be as knowledgeable about breastfeeding, specific bills, and issues
- You must be very clear in what you are asking for or referencing



What you need to know

- Know your issue (facts, figures, statistics)
- Know what you want
- Know who supports your issue
- Know the position of your elected officials
 - What committees do they serve on
 - Do they have a connection to the issue
- Know what the opposition says and what else is being done around your issue



What you need to know

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- Is your legislator already a co-sponsor of the bill (if so thank him/her)
- If not, be prepared to ask that he/she add their name as a co-sponsor of the bill
- Know the lead sponsor of the bill as well as the bill number



Meeting talking points

- Introduce yourself
- Describe your role or your group's role in breastfeeding
- Explain why breastfeeding is important
- Discuss what you want the congressional member to do and why it is important



3 Specific issues/examples

- **Breastfeeding promotion act**
 - H.R. 2819 Rep Carolyn Maloney (NY)
 - S1244 Senator Jeff Merkley (OR)
- Amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to protect breastfeeding women from being fired or discriminated against in the workplace.
- Provides tax incentives for businesses that establish private lactation areas in the workplace, or provide breastfeeding equipment or consultation services to their employees.
- Provides for a performance standard to ensure breast pumps are safe and effective.
- Allows breastfeeding equipment and consultation services to be tax deductible for families
- Protects the privacy of breastfeeding mothers by ensuring they have break time and a private place to pump
- <http://maloney.house.gov/documents/women/breastfeeding/061009%20Breastfeeding%20Promotion%20Act.pdf>



Why is the act important

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- Postpartum return to work is associated with shorter breastfeeding duration and decreased breastfeeding exclusivity
- Lack of breastmilk increases risk of acute and chronic diseases and conditions in infants
- Lack of breastfeeding increases the burden of insurers
- Breastfeeding accommodation by employers is cost effective



Countering opponents

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- Be prepared to respond to possible objections by opponents (businesses and business organizations)
- Have employer cost savings numbers available with examples
- Discuss disparities between mothers with employer accommodations and those without



What do you want the member to do

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- Sign on as a co-sponsor to the appropriate bill
- Ask other colleagues to sign on as co-sponsors
- Speak in favor of the bill during committee meetings and hearings
- Vote for the bill when asked



Health care reform

- **H.R 3200 America's Affordable Health Choices Act**
- 5 main committees of jurisdiction
 - House
 - Energy and Commerce Committee
 - Education and Labor Committee
 - Ways and Means Committee
 - Senate
 - Committee on Health, Education, Labor, Pensions
 - Committee on Finance
- 3 major legislative proposals



A foot in the door

- Senator Merkley successfully inserted the Breastfeeding Promotion Act as an amendment into the Affordable Health Choices Act in the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
- Find out if your legislator is on any of these committees
- Ask that the Breastfeeding Promotion Act be inserted as an amendment into any version of the bill that your legislator is working on



Medicaid reimbursement

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- **Medicaid reimbursement for IBCLC services**
- Ask any member of the Senate Committee on Finance to add "International Board Certified Lactation Consultants" to the expanded list of Medicaid providers listed in Section IV, page 24 of The Senate Finance Committee's policy document entitled, "Description of Policy Options, Expanding Health Care Coverage. Expanding Health Care Coverage: Proposals to Provide Affordable Coverage to All Americans."



Tips

- Thank the staffer or Member for their time
- Obtain their card and leave your contact information
- Give them a folder with several supporting documents (not an encyclopedia!)
- Stick to your talking points
- Treat staff with respect (don't argue)
- Make a specific request
- Follow up within 2 weeks