

To: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

From: Dr. Eva Galvez

Re: Strong support for HB 2541 - Expression of milk protections for all farmworker women

Date: 03/19/2025

Dear Honorable Dacia Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and members of the Committee,

I am the Medical Director of one of the largest community-based clinics serving people from all walks of life but particularly agricultural workers. As a family physician with nearly two decades of experience and a mom, I am writing in support of this bill to help make it easier for my patients who wish to continue to breastfeed while working in the field to have the opportunity to do so.

The idea of expression of breastmilk at work with electric pumps has become so common most working mothers just assume that this is available to them should they choose to nurse their child up to 18 months whether or not they return to work. However, even if the break laws include most women the laws ironically exclude women who are working in the field temporarily and doing hand harvest piece work commuting from their homes.

When I reflect on our patient population, this exclusion exempts many of our farmworker moms or those within the childbearing age working in the field temporarily or seasonally. These are the moms who are generally younger, less stable with their work and working seasonally without support structures in place at work.

Given the proven science with the benefits of breastfeeding for children we should be doing all we can to make it possible for women who choose to breastfeed to continue to do so, if possible, with minimal accommodations in the workplace.

I wish that the contemplated breaks were compensated so that those working on piece rate would not be feeling rushed to return without pumping completely but at least to have the opportunity to express at work would bring much positive relief and health benefits to the lives of the expecting mothers and those postpartum.

I strongly support removing barriers exempting seasonal farmworkers from such important protections. I urge this committee to pass HB 2541.

Sincerely,
Dr. Eva Galvez