

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5885

As of February 24, 1997

Title: An act relating to infant breast-feeding.

Brief Description: Requiring employers to allow mothers to breast-feed.

Sponsors: Senators Kline, Patterson, Prentice, Kohl, Heavey, Brown, Fraser and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 2/24/97, 2/28/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Washington does not have statutes that address the right of a woman to breast-feed her child. Several other states have enacted laws specifically addressing this issue. For example, breast-feeding in New York is a civil right and a woman is entitled to breast-feed her child in any public or private location where she is authorized to be. Both Florida and Texas have statutes that entitle a mother to breast-feed and that allow facilities or businesses to use "baby-friendly" or "mother-friendly" designations in promotional materials if the entity develops a qualified breast-feeding policy

Summary of Bill: The Legislature finds that infant breast-feeding is a basic act of nurture to be encouraged for health and family value reasons and recognizes that workplace policies protecting the right to breast-feed furthers these goals.

A woman is authorized to breast-feed her infant child at the workplace in any public or private location where she is permitted to be. "Infant child" means a child under two years of age.

A public or private sector employer that wishes to use a "baby-friendly" designation in its promotional materials must develop a workplace policy on breast-feeding approved by the Department of Health. The policy must address flexible work scheduling, accessible private locations and clean water facilities, and hygienic milk storage alternatives

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 22, 1997.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.