PREGNANCY ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Important to families' economic security

- Nearly half of women are sole or primary breadwinners for their families & need to continue working throughout pregnancy
- Preparing for a new baby means preparing for increased expenses
- Many women have limited paid or unpaid leave

Essential for the health of mom & baby

- Preterm birth is the leading cause of infant mortality during the first month of life
- Physically demanding work puts women at higher risk for preterm birth
- Adjustments to working conditions can reduce these risks

Easy & beneficial to implement

- Twenty-three states have already passed laws to provide a clear and consistent standard for employers
- Most accommodations are free or low-cost
- Making accommodations may reduce the risk of both litigation and high-cost preterm births
- Family-friendly workplaces see increased productivity, loyalty, and retention of employees
Requests Included:

To be excused from heavy lifting, climbing, or frequent bending
To be given breaks from sitting/standing for long hours
To limit hours to 40 per week (no overtime)
To avoid chemicals, radiation, or other hazardous substances
Temporary schedule/shift changes due to morning sickness/fatigue
More frequent breaks
Ability to drink water/snack during shifts
Temporary change to light duty/desk work
Time and space to express breastmilk

They reported:

BEING REFUSED accommodations
NOT ASKING for accommodations due to fear of job loss
HAVING HOURS CUT following requests
BEING "BERATED" for an extra bathroom trip
FEELING FRUSTRATED that asking for accommodations - like breaks to treat gestational diabetes - felt like "asking for the moon"

"I had to quit working 6 weeks before my due date because I was unable to lift any more. That cut into my FMLA and I had to return to work when my daughter was 6 weeks old."

--Kim, Paramedic

"They aren't willing to work with me."
--Sarah, Factory Employee