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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** [Neal A. Patel](mailto:neal_patel@heller.senate.gov)/[Michawn Rich](mailto:michawn_rich@heller.senate.gov) | | June 4, 2015 | 202-224-6244 |   **Heller, Ayotte, Casey, Shaheen, and Nadler Announce Bipartisan Legislation that Would Protect Pregnant Workers from Workplace Discrimination**  *Following Uncertainty in Wake of Landmark Supreme Court Case,* Young v. UPS*, Legislation Would Secure Full Workplace Protections for Pregnant Workers*  **(Washington, DC)**– Today, U.S. Senators Dean Heller, Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Bob Casey (D-PA), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) unveiled legislation that would protect pregnant workers from workplace discrimination.    Following a Supreme Court decision in the case of *Young v. UPS* that left the workplace rights of pregnant workers uncertain, the *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act* would address legal ambiguities and help ensure that pregnant women are treated fairly on the job. The legislation, which is closely modeled after the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA), would require employers to make reasonable accommodations -- such as a minor job modification – that would allow pregnant workers to continue working and prevent them from being forced out on leave or out of their jobs. The bill also prohibits employers from denying employment opportunities to women based on their need for reasonable accommodations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.  “Expecting mothers should not be penalized for being pregnant. As a father of two daughters, I believe providing reasonable accommodations on the job for pregnant workers is important to maintain a healthy pregnancy. I am pleased to support this legislation because it addresses women’s medical needs without imposing an undue burden on employers,” **said Senator Heller.**  “In New Hampshire, about 70 percent of women who gave birth in 2013 also worked during their pregnancies, and ensuring that pregnant workers are treated equally in the workplace is essential to working families and our economy,” **said Senator Ayotte**.  “Our bipartisan legislation would require employers to make reasonable accommodations to allow pregnant workers to keep working, and prevent them from being forced out on leave or out of their jobs – helping ensure that no mother is forced to choose between the health of her baby and her job.”  “No worker should live in fear that her job is at risk simply because she’s pregnant,” **said Senator Casey**. “This is commonsense legislation that will finally provide pregnant workers the comprehensive workplace protections they deserve.”    Women should have every right to reasonable workplace accommodations as they provide for their families and contribute to the economy,” **said Senator Shaheen.** “This bipartisan legislation will protect pregnant women from threats and retaliation as they seek the accommodations they deserve, and I’m excited for the new momentum we have for this legislation in the Senate.”  “The Supreme Court’s decision in *Young v. UPS,* still leaves millions of pregnant workers unsure of their rights,” **said** **Congressman Nadler**. “It doesn’t need to be this complicated. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act creates a simple, clear standard for every employer and is based on decades of case law. I am proud to stand here today with my colleagues from the Senate and reintroduce this critical legislation with bipartisan support to ensure that no woman has to choose between a healthy pregnancy and a paycheck.”    The following is a statement by **National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) Vice President and General Counsel Emily Martin**:    “Women make up almost half the workforce, but all too often they’re forced to make an impossible choice:  risk their own health and pregnancy to keep a job or lose their income at the moment they can least afford it.  Pregnant workers are ready, willing and able to work but they are often pushed out by employers who refuse to make even minor temporary changes to their jobs to accommodate pregnant workers’ medical needs.  We urge Congress to strengthen the law and put the Dark Ages behind us by passing the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act because no woman should have to choose between her job and her pregnancy.”    “This strong bipartisan showing reflects the reality that Americans support fairness for pregnant workers, regardless of their political leanings,” **said Dina Bakst, Co-Founder & Co-President of A Better Balance**. “We applaud our champions for being leaders on this issue and prioritizing the health and wellness of pregnant workers. Pregnant women don't have the luxury of time and excessive resources to rely on a confusing legal standard as recently laid out by the Supreme Court. The PWFA provides much needed clarity so that expecting mothers can avoid the impossible choice between earning a paycheck and staying healthy – a clarity that nine states since 2013 have already made clear.”    "Congress should recognize that the law must keep pace with the times. In 2015, women are the primary breadwinners in many U.S. households and families rely on that income to survive,” **said Michael Macleod-Ball, acting director of the ACLU’s Washington Legislative Office**. “The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would further enshrine the principle that no woman should have to choose between her job and a healthy pregnancy in this day and age. Congress should move swiftly to adopt this measured, bipartisan approach to an important national issue.”    "The reintroduction of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act is an essential step in the effort to eradicate pregnancy discrimination in this country," **said Debra L. Ness, president of the National Partnership for Women & Families**. "Pregnant workers and their families simply cannot afford to be unnecessarily and unfairly fired or pushed out of their jobs at a time that is so critical for their health and economic security, especially when minor on-the-job modifications would allow them to continue working and providing for their families. Today's bipartisan action is a promising sign that lawmakers are ready to take real action to protect pregnant workers from this kind of discrimination. It is time for all members of Congress to come together to pass this badly needed bill."    Sixty-two percent of pregnant women and new moms are in the labor force, yet under current law, pregnant workers can be placed on unpaid leave or forced out of their jobs because of a pregnancy. The recent Supreme Court decision in *Young v. UPS* recognized that pregnant workers may need temporary accommodations in the workplace, but placed an undue burden on pregnant workers to prove that they were victims of discrimination. The *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act*, by using a framework familiar to employers under the ADA, makes it easier for employers to comply with the law, and easier for pregnant workers to request those minor modifications that will enable them to continue working.  The legislation is supported by: A Better Balance; the AFL-CIO; the American Association of University Women; the American Civil Liberties Union; the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; California Women’s Law Center; Equal Rights Advocates; Hadassah; the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center; Legal Momentum; the Main Street Alliance; the National Partnership for Women & Families; the National Organization for Women Foundation; the National Women’s Law Center; and many others.  ###  [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_fb.png](http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Senator-Dean-Heller/325751330177) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_tw.png](http://twitter.com/SenDeanHeller) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_yt.png](http://www.youtube.com/user/SenDeanHeller) |