

January 11, 2021

Dear Chairman Klemin and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing seeking a DO NOT PASS recommendation on HB1105.

As a business owner and pastor's wife who also breastfed my 3 children, I believe that the proposed removal of the word "discreet" and the addition of a penalty to the current legislation is unnecessary and could have dangerous implications. In our endeavor to protect one group of people, we must not take away the rights and protection of another. It is possible to protect all parties involved, and I believe the current wording already does this.

When I breastfed my children, I did not consider myself as part of a disabled or protected group. I am a strong woman who knows my rights and convictions. If, at any time, an individual in a public setting would dare to criticize me for a choice I made for personal, religious, or medical reasons, I feel fully capable of fighting back using the tools available to me in the free market. I would boycott the business and call for my friends, relatives, and acquaintances to do the same. I would not expect the government to get involved on my behalf to penalize someone for THEIR personal choices. I, as a mother, have the right to choose where I do business. I will choose businesses and churches, etc, that support my choice to breastfeed my children in the way that I feel comfortable. However, as a business owner, I should also have the right to decide how I expect people to act in my place of business. I want the right to choose, both as a breastfeeding mother AND as a business owner. Since I am both, I can't possibly be in favor of wording that would give more rights to one group over the other.

Breastfeeding mothers AND business owners are both protected by the language currently used in the century code. The term "discreet" allows businesses or churches to have certain dress requirements; however, it also does not allow anyone to force a breastfeeding mother to leave in order to feed her child. My concern is that if this wording is removed, it takes away all protection for those who have religious or personal convictions regarding dress. For example, the current dress code to enter a mosque requires men to wear "loose and clean clothes that do not reveal the shape of the body. Women must also wear loose clothing, and it must reach to their wrists and ankles. Women must also cover their heads with a hijab or similar covering." If this wording were changed, would the mosques lose their right to ask women to be covered if a woman happened to be breastfeeding her child?

Furthermore, the original wording for extra protection for breastfeeding mothers was added to the indecent exposure century code, in which the woman's breast being exposed is not even listed. Even if a woman accidentally, or even purposely, exposed her breast while feeding her child, she isn't even at risk of an infraction in any place of business. The rights of the breastfeeding mother are already provided for with the current wording, and the mother currently cannot be penalized in any way.

I am opposed to changing the current wording, which incites no penalties while also protecting the rights of breastfeeding mothers, to wording that could impose unnecessary infractions and penalties upon another group of citizens for standing up for their convictions. Business owners want to make a living. We want to make our customers happy, because we need our customers to stay open. The power of the free market is enough motivation for me, as a business owner, to accommodate a breastfeeding mother to the best of my ability. Additionally, as a breastfeeding mother, this was also my experience in every public place I frequented.

The proposed wording of HB 1105 seems vindictive, harsh, and unnecessary to me with my perspective as both a mother and business owner.

Thank you so much for your consideration of my testimony. I also plan to be present on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 to provide oral testimony.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions! I would love to speak to you.

Sincerely,

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