

My name is Lara Jones and I am a mother of two young children living in West Fargo. I am writing in support of HB1105, regarding breastfeeding in public. I strongly ask that you consider changing the wording of current breastfeeding laws in North Dakota.

Current wording of the law allows women to breastfeed in public if it is in a "discreet and modest manner". This wording is ambiguous and open to a VERY wide variety of interpretation. No other state includes such ambiguous language in their breastfeeding laws. Let me share with you my story, and how this phrasing could be problematic for mothers trying to provide nutrition to their babies.

When my first child was born, we were living in a rural area. The drive to the clinic for well child visits took an hour, so by the time we arrived in the waiting room, I had a hungry newborn. It takes time for new moms and new babies to figure out an easy and comfortable breastfeeding relationship, and we were no exception. I tried to feed my screaming baby in the waiting room with a cover over us, but he was struggling to latch and fighting the blanket placed over his head. We struggled for a while, and finally, I gave up, and decided to try again later. We got called into our appointment, and soon after, he fell asleep, greatly delaying his feeding session.

When we arrived home after what was a very long trip for a newly postpartum mom and newborn, I began experiencing symptoms: exhaustion, fever, and chills. It felt like a terrible case of influenza. Mastitis was setting in because I had delayed the feeding of my newborn son for the sake of "modesty". It took many days for me to recover. My husband, with directives from our healthcare provider, diligently nursed me back to health and took over the infant care that I could not manage to do during my illness. I vowed that very day that I would never let someone else's interpretation of "modesty" stand in the way of meeting my family's basic needs for health and nutrition.

We do not choose when or where our infants become hungry. No mother should have to wonder if she should meet her infant's basic needs based on someone else's interpretation of modesty. Please support mothers as they work hard to provide the best possible nutrition for their children when and where they need it.

I will be eagerly watching the progress of this bill. I truly appreciate your time!

Sincerely,
Lara Jones