

Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee

Public Testimony of the CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

H.B. 7022: *An Act Exempting Breastfeeding Supplies from the Sales and Use Taxes*

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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide nonprofit that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For forty-five years, CWEALF has advocated for policies that advance the economic security of women across our state and promote gender equity in the workplace.

CWEALF urges the committee to support H.B. 7022: *An Act Exempting Breastfeeding Supplies from the Sales and Use Taxes*.

The health benefits of breastfeeding are incredibly well-researched. Breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life is critical to achieve optimal growth and also protects infants from childhood illnesses. Breast milk provides an important source of energy for babies who are 6 months to 23 months oldⁱ. Breastfeeding also provides numerous benefits to mothers, including improved short-term health outcomes and a lower risk for developing future diseases. Breastfeeding can also reduce the risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and type 2 diabetes.ⁱⁱ

Despite the health benefits breastfeeding provides for both mother and child, supplies needed in order for a mother to breastfeed are often unaffordable. The price of breast pumps ranges from \$40 to \$185 for single battery-operated pumps. The price for double pumps can cost from \$60 to \$3500.ⁱⁱⁱ These prices do not include additional expenses for supplies such as storage for breast milk or nursing pads.

Exemption of breastfeeding supplies from sales tax will alleviate at least some of the costs associated with these products and will benefit women and their families, especially those who are low-income, throughout the state of Connecticut. House Bill No. 7022 also continues our state's recognition and repeal of certain sales taxes that directly impact women. In 2016, the General Assembly removed the sales tax on feminine hygiene products and diapers. CWEALF urges the Committee to support H.B. 7022.

ⁱ <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/breastfeeding/en/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3508512/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://children.costhelper.com/breast-pump.html>