

CALIFORNIA
WOMEN'S
LAW CENTER

March 15, 2011

The Honorable Noreen Evans
State Capitol, Room 4016
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIA FACSIMILE to (916) 323-6958

RE: SB 299 Pregnancy Disability Leave Legislation – SUPPORT

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Executive Director
Katie Buckland

Combined Federal Campaign #6220

Dear Senator Evans:

Thank you for introducing SB 299 in the California Senate. The California Women's Law Center ("CWLC") strongly supports SB 299 which would ensure that employer-provided health care coverage is continued for women on pregnancy leave under the Pregnancy Disability Leave ("PDL") law. Since its founding in 1989, CWLC has worked to ensure that life opportunities for women and girls are free from unjust social, economic, and political constraints. It is the first law center in California solely dedicated to addressing the comprehensive and unique legal needs of women and girls.

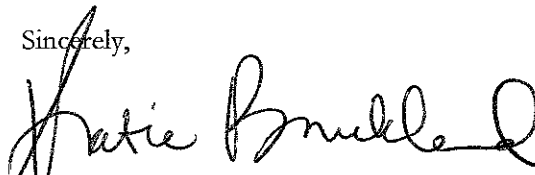
The PDL provides leave from work for pregnancy-related conditions but does not require employers to continue health insurance for women while they are on leave. This is a significant gap in the law that puts the health and well-being of working women and their newborns at risk. Access to health care is absolutely critical for pregnant women and their infants. Without this coverage, many working women are forced to choose between losing coverage or risking their health and returning to work prematurely to prevent losing coverage. Because of these gaps in coverage, an estimated 50% of the workforce is not afforded the continued health insurance coverage guaranteed under federal and state leave laws.

Three quarters of women entering today's workforce will become pregnant at least once while employed, and those who become pregnant while working increasingly stay in the workforce. Protecting health insurance coverage during pregnancy leave is essential to protecting the health and economic security of working women and their families.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation.

We urge all legislators to join you in supporting SB 299.

Sincerely,



Katie Buckland, Executive Director