



Civil Rights and Human Services Subcommittee
Workforce Protections Subcommittee
House Education and Labor Committee
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

**NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice Supports
The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act**

March 18, 2021

Dear Chairwoman Bonamici, Ranking Member Fulcher, Chairwoman Adams, and Ranking Member Keller,

Our mission at NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice is to educate, organize, and advocate for economic and social transformation. For almost 50 years, we have been guided by Catholic Social Teaching, which tells us to place the needs of people at the socioeconomic margins at the center of our advocacy. Founded by women religious in the 1970s, we continue their legacy today by building a just society that ensures all people have what they need to live dignified lives. We are proud to have over 100,000 supporters across the country who share our passion for justice.

At NETWORK Lobby, we recognize that the basis for a dignified way of life begins with opportunity and inclusivity in the workplace. We are proud to support the **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act** because it modernizes current law and closes the gaps in protections afforded to pregnant workers. This legislation would open doors for gainfully employed women who choose to bring new life into the world.

Despite current protections for pregnant workers from workplace discrimination included in the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 (PDA), over 37,000 pregnancy discrimination charges have been filed between 2010 and 2020 with the U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). This demonstrates the gaps in protections afforded to pregnant workers under current law. Pregnant workers are routinely denied basic, temporary accommodations to ensure a healthy pregnancy. These accommodations are often as simple as a stool to sit on, a break from lifting heavy boxes, schedule changes, and protection from hazardous or dangerous conditions. These accommodations are especially important for women in jobs requiring physical activity or exposure to hazardous conditions. In lieu of reasonable accommodations at the workplace, many pregnant workers face undue pressures to take a leave of absence, which may jeopardize their livelihood.

This common sense, bipartisan legislation promotes healthy pregnancies, economic security for pregnant women and their families, and is faithful to Catholic Social Justice. Our faith calls us to respect the dignity of all women who are nurturing the life of persons created in God's image. The pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S Economy*, states clearly that, "human work has a special dignity and is a key to achieving justice in society." To create a just world for working women, we must recognize the dignity of labor.

The reality of persistent discrimination in the workplace and the lack of clarity around employer obligations calls for new legislation to provide straightforward guidance for both employers and pregnant workers. Support for pregnancies means support for pregnant workers.

We strongly urge you to support the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

Sincerely,

Gina Kelley

Government Relations Associate

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

cc: Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx