

2008 -- H 7467

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2008

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY - BREASTFEEDING - PROMOTES THE  
INTERESTS OF MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Introduced By: Representatives Naughton, McNamara, E Coderre, and Dennigan

Date Introduced: February 13, 2008

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 13.5

4 BREASTFEEDING IN PUBLIC PLACES

5 **23-13.5-1. Findings.** – The general assembly hereby finds and declares that breastfeeding  
6 of a baby is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of  
7 maternal and child health; that breast milk is the optimal form of nutrition for infants, with a  
8 range of benefits for infant's health, growth, immunity and development; that breastfeeding  
9 promotes infant health by lowering rates of infection, hospitalization and certain chronic diseases;  
10 that mothers who breastfeed their children benefit physically and psychologically; that families  
11 with breastfed children benefit from enhanced mother-child attachment and cost-savings, both  
12 direct and medical; that breastfeeding contributes to society at-large through economic and  
13 environmental gains through reduced work force absenteeism, increased worker retention and  
14 productivity and lower health insurance costs due to children of employees remaining healthier;  
15 that existing legislation exempts breastfeeding mothers from disorderly conduct laws but does to  
16 provide a mother with the explicit right to breastfeed her child in any place open to the public;  
17 and that states with laws protecting the right of a mother to breastfeed her child in any place open  
18 to the public have higher rates of breastfeeding.

1           **23-13.5-2. Breastfeeding in public places.** – A woman may feed her child by bottle or  
2 breast in any place open to the public.

3           **23-13.5-3. Right of action.** – Any denial, or attempt to deny, the full and equal  
4 enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of a  
5 place open to the public to a woman because she is breast feeding a child is actionable as a claim  
6 brought in the district court to enjoin future denials of the right to breastfeed and/or seek other  
7 damages.

8           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY - BREASTFEEDING - PROMOTES THE  
INTERESTS OF MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

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- 1           This act would allow a woman to feed her child by bottle or breast in any place open to
- 2           the public and would allow her a private cause of action for denial of this right.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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