

2008 -- S 2283

LC01477

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2008

A N A C T

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

Introduced By: Senators Perry, Moura, Sosnowski, Gallo, and Pichardo

Date Introduced: February 07, 2008

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

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
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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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