



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Our Moms Deserve More: Senator Kennedy Stands with WNY Mothers, Doctors & Business Owners to Call for Lactation Rooms in Airports

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY August 18, 2015

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, HEALTH, CHILDREN, WOMEN'S HEALTH, AIR OR AIRPLANE**



As National Breastfeeding Month Continues, Kennedy Partners With Local Moms to Call for Increased Accommodations for New and Nursing Mothers

Study Shows That Barely 8 Percent of Airports Have Designated Lactation Rooms; Kennedy's Bill Calls on NYS to Follow Illinois and California's Lead & Require All Major New York State Airports to Designate Space for Breastfeeding Moms

BUFFALO, NY – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) stood with Western New York mothers, doctors and business owners today to push for legislation that would increase support for mothers who breastfeed by requiring major airports to set aside a lactation room inside terminals. As breastfeeding rates continue to climb across the county, there is a growing and immediate need for these accommodations, especially for moms who must travel for work. A Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study shows that nationally, 79 percent of newborn infants were introduced to breastfeeding shortly after birth in 2011; that number is slightly higher in New York State, at just over 80 percent, and slightly lower in Erie County at around 68 percent.

Unfortunately, the number of mothers who choose to continue breastfeeding exclusively drops significantly in the following months after birth. CDC statistics show that nationally and in New York State, only around 16.5 percent of moms continue to solely breastfeed six months after giving birth. While this change in nutrition choice can be attributed to breastfeeding complications for some mothers, it is also often due to a lack of accommodations for women who have to pump. Many mothers who are required to travel for work often quit nursing because they have no sanitary location to pump breast milk.

“The decision whether to breastfeed is a personal, individual choice for each and every mother welcoming home a new addition. As these families grow and expand, so too does the number of mothers nationwide who are choosing to nurse their newborns, and we need to make sure we’re providing the proper support for them as once they leave the hospital,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “Traveling with a baby can be stressful enough; New York’s mothers shouldn’t also have to worry about finding a sanitary and private place to nurse their child. Through this legislation, we’re simply making sure that our mothers across the state have access to the accommodations they deserve.”

“I am a mother of two boys and traveled with and without my babies while I was breastfeeding. There were times I chose not to travel for work because there was no place to pump in airports,” said **Rachel Jackson of Rachel’s Remedies, LLC**. “We need to encourage, not inhibit, the ability of traveling mothers to continue breastfeeding. Mothers who are not able to pump or nurse their babies in sanitary conditions are more prone to illness, and more likely to quit breastfeeding.”

“We fully support Senator Kennedy’s efforts to continue to build a more breastfeeding friendly culture that has many short and long term health benefits for both women and children,” said **Dr. Stephen Turkovich, Chief Medical Officer at Women and Children’s Hospital of Buffalo**. “Providing optimal environments for mothers who choose to breastfeed in private is key to this endeavor and we are thankful to Senator Kennedy for supporting a mother’s choice to breastfeed.”

Through this legislation, airports operated by a city or county or airports which see more than one million enplanements annually will be required to set aside a room or other location by 2017 that allows mothers to privately nurse their children or pump breast milk. The Buffalo Niagara International Airport currently see's approximately 3 million enplanements per year and thus, would be subject to this legislation. Each of these rooms must include at least a chair and electrical outlet, and cannot be located inside a public restroom. Airports that see fewer than one million enplanements would be required to make these changes when a new terminal is created, or an existing one is expanded or renovated.

Kennedy also noted that City of Buffalo statistics show many travelers at both major WNY airports have traveled from Southern Ontario to take advantage of lower costs, making up nearly 40% of travelers at Buffalo-Niagara International Airport, and up to 80% of travelers at Niagara Falls International Airport. The addition of lactation rooms to these airports would be yet another selling point for Canadian families that are potentially traveling from

upwards of 2.5 hours away.

Steps are also being taken at the federal level to make these accommodations.

Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth has proposed the Friendly Airports for Mothers Act (FAM), which would require private lactation spaces in terminals nationwide. Similar legislation has already been adopted by other states across the country. Earlier this month, Illinois' Governor signed a new law which will require large airports like Chicago's O'Hare and Midway International to have lactation rooms by 2017. California will start making similar accommodations as early as next year, and New York's JFK, LaGuardia and Newark already have lactation pods.

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