



The First Step in Obesity Prevention: Breastfeeding Support (HB 313 - Simon)

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, **breastfeeding plays a foundational role in the prevention childhood obesity.**ⁱ Although most new mothers hope to breastfeed and 75% of children are initially breastfed, only 13% are exclusively breastfed 6 months later.ⁱⁱ One of the most frequent obstacles to continued breastfeeding is a lack of accommodation in the workplace and other public settings.

HB 313 directs the Office of Administration to establish a pilot program that would create a space, other than a bathroom, in state-owned buildings that is shielded from view and free from intrusion, which may be used to express breast milk.

The legislation garnered the support of both chambers including 33 co-authors. The new law became effective June 28th with the signature of the governor. Raising healthy children begins at birth. Policies and facilities that provide support for breastfeeding mothers increase the likelihood of choosing healthy nursing options and help combat childhood obesity.

- New law requires that certain state buildings provide suitable accommodation in the form of a room, other than a toilet stall, for the exclusive use of women to breastfeed a child or express breast milk.
- New law requires the superintendent of the office of state buildings to construct at least one lactation room in 10 state buildings on or before July 1, 2014. It authorizes construction of more than 10 rooms depending on cost.
- New law will increase opportunity breastfeeding rates among mothers and combat childhood obesity.

ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding," Washington, DC: 2011.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.