



The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States House of Representatives
104 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

June xx, 2015

Dear Congresswoman Duckworth:

We, the undersigned organizations, thank you for introducing the Friendly Airports for Mothers (FAM) Act of 2015. By leading Congress to protect and support breastfeeding, you demonstrate a commitment to our nation's mothers and children.

The FAM Act would require all large and medium hub airports to provide a private, non-bathroom space in each terminal for mothers to express breast milk. The space must be accessible to persons with disabilities, available in each terminal building after the security checkpoint, and include a place to sit, a table or other flat surface, and an electrical outlet. Airports would have two years to comply and would be able to use Airport Improvement Program funds for the purpose of complying with the new requirement.

Human milk is the preferred and most appropriate source of infant nutrition, adapting over time to meet the changing needs of the growing child. The United States Breastfeeding Committee joins the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and all major medical authorities in recommending that infants get no food or drink other than human milk for their first six months and continue to breastfeed for at least the first 1-2 years of life.

The evidence for the value of breastfeeding to children's *and* women's health is scientific, solid, and continually being reaffirmed by new research. Compared with formula-fed children, those who are breastfed have a reduced risk of ear, skin, stomach, and respiratory infections; diarrhea; sudden infant death syndrome; and necrotizing enterocolitis. In the longer term, breastfed children have a reduced risk of obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, asthma, and childhood leukemia. Women who breastfed their children have a reduced long-term risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers.

Breastfeeding is a proven primary prevention strategy, building a foundation for life-long health and wellness. Breastfeeding mothers who choose or need to travel should not have to sacrifice these positive health outcomes simply because they do not have a clean and private space to breastfeed or pump breast milk.

Breastfeeding also provides a range of economic and environmental benefits for society. A study of the pediatric health burden from current breastfeeding rates shows that, if 90% of U.S. mothers exclusively breastfed for six months, the nation could save \$13 billion and prevent the loss of 911 lives, annually. A similar study estimates the maternal health burden, showing that suboptimal breastfeeding rates incur a total of \$17.4 billion in annual cost to society resulting from premature death, \$733.7 million in direct health care costs, and \$126.1 million in indirect costs (time away from work).

For all of these reasons, *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*; the Institute of Medicine report, *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention*; and the National Prevention Strategy each call for promotion of breastfeeding-friendly environments.

Most women today choose to breastfeed their infants, but a range of obstacles can make it difficult for women to fit breastfeeding into their lives. No matter what they're doing or where they are, breastfeeding mothers need to express milk every few hours. An airport is just one of many environments where women face challenges trying to find a clean, private space to nurse or pump. Travelers rarely have control over how long they are in transit, making accessible accommodations within airports a critical priority. A [recent study of 100 airports](#) found that while 62% reported being "breastfeeding friendly," only 8% met the minimum requirements for a breastfeeding mother.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2020 objectives include increasing the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through 3 months and 6 months, and who continue breastfeeding for twelve months. The FAM Act would ensure breastfeeding travelers and airport employees have access to facilities that make this possible. This is an important step toward ensuring all families have the opportunity to reach their personal breastfeeding goals.

Again, we applaud your leadership in introducing the FAM Act and stand ready to help you achieve its passage.

SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS

United States Breastfeeding Committee