



## What the Federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act Means for Pennsylvanians

*Pregnant Pennsylvanians have more protections, but we still need a state law*

Contact: Tara Murtha

[tmurtha@womenslawproject.org](mailto:tmurtha@womenslawproject.org)

**JUNE 27, 2023, PENNSYLVANIA** -- The federal [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](#) (PWFA), a new law extending the right to reasonable accommodations to pregnant and postpartum workers across the country, goes into effect today.

**“Today is a huge relief,” says WLP attorney Sophia Elliot, who works with pregnant Pennsylvanians navigating discrimination in the workplace and school as part of the WLP Legal Navigator program.**

“There’s a perception that pregnancy discrimination is an issue that’s been solved, but there have been significant gaps in the law and enforcement that have enabled insidious forms of pregnancy discrimination to continue. As an attorney working with pregnancy discrimination clients, I see firsthand how some employers attempt to force pregnant workers out of their job by refusing to provide basic, temporary accommodations such as permission to wear sneakers or access to extra water.”

The Women's Law Project has been advocating for both the federal and state versions of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act for at least a decade.

**“No one should be forced to choose between protecting their health and staying employed or in school just because they are pregnant,” says Maggie Neely, a WLP attorney who also works with pregnant clients.**

In addition to gender rights, eliminating pregnancy discrimination is a maternal health, worker’s rights, and racial justice issue. Black women file a disproportionately large percentage of workplace pregnancy discrimination charges, and experiencing discrimination can contribute to adverse pregnancy outcomes.

**The federal PWFA does not obviate the need for state-based protections.**

“The federal PWFA significantly improves legal protections for pregnant workers, we still need to pass the Pennsylvania Pregnant Workers Fairness Act,” says Amal Bass, WLP policy director and interim co-executive director. “The PPWFA would cover more people and provide more remedies. It’s always best practice to enshrine civil rights protections in state law.”

### **The WLP Legal Navigator Program**

The WLP Legal Navigator Program is focused on early intervention, education, and assistance to ensure more pregnant and lactating workers and students across Pennsylvania can protect their health and economic security with minimal disruption to work or school. The goal is to ensure job security and reasonable, temporary accommodations before someone loses their job or is otherwise harmed.

See more information on the WLP Legal Navigator Program [here](#).

Download a fact sheet on the PWFA from A Better Balance [here](#).

It's important to note under the new law, employers must post a notice for employees explaining the right to be free from discrimination. Employees can learn more about their workplace rights, including the right to accommodations for pregnancy and related conditions, and how to file a complaint [here](#).

###