

Extend Paid Maternity Leave for State Employees + Protect Pumping in Public




House Bill 329 State Employee Maternity and Leave Amendments
Sponsors: Representative Ariel Defay & Senator Michael McKell





Policy Snapshot: Expand paid maternity leave for state employees to 12 weeks and codify pumping protections to improve maternal and infant health, strengthen workforce retention, and support families when infant care costs are highest.

The Problem

Maternity Leave

-  Utah provides six weeks of paid leave for new mothers, which research shows is insufficient.
-  Shorter leave increases health risks for mothers and disrupts early bonding essential to child development.
-  At the same time, infant care is the most expensive and burdensome child care cost for Utah families.

Pumping Breast Milk in Public

-  Utah law protects public breastfeeding, but does not explicitly protect public pumping.
-  This legal gap creates uncertainty for nursing moms when outside the workplace.

The Solution

Maternity Leave

- Extend paid maternity leave from six to 12 weeks and extend coverage to include the adoption of children ages 0 to 5.
- Launch a pilot allowing Local Education Agencies to offer up to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave for teachers.

Pumping Breast Milk in Public

- Amend existing law to explicitly allow pumping breast milk in any public space where breastfeeding is permitted.

The Potential Impact

Benefits of 12 Weeks Paid Leave:
Positive child development outcomes, improved maternal physical and mental health, and increased employee retention.

70% less turnover among working mothers with 12 weeks of paid leave

Funding

State Employee Leave: No additional funding needed, as existing department budgets would absorb the cost.

Teacher Leave Pilot: **One-time \$3M** from the Education Stabilization Fund to support the Optional Paid Leave Reimbursement Program over three fiscal years



Governor Cox prioritized expanding postpartum recovery leave for state employees in his FY27 Budget Recommendations.

Our Approach

The Policy Project is taking a holistic approach to family affordability, giving families the flexibility to choose what works best — whether they need two incomes, want a parent at home, or need a new mother to keep her income.

Boost Financial Flexibility for Parents

Increase Tax Credit Participation (RFA)
Expand Child Tax Credit Eligibility (HB290)

Increase Access to Child Care

Grants for Home-Based Providers (SB214)
Business Child Care Tax Credit (HB190)

Support New Mothers

Extend State Maternity Leave (HB329)
Protect Pumping Breast Milk (HB329)