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The Time to Care Coalition Commends the New Jersey State Assembly and Senate for sending state bill that will provide protections for pregnant workers to Governor Christie's desk.

New Jersey's pregnant workers are poised to gain vital job protections under bill S2995/A4486, passed by the New Jersey State Assembly on January 6, 2014. The legislation, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg and Senator Fred Madden (S2995), prohibits discrimination against pregnant women by adding protective language to the state's Law Against Discrimination Act (LAD). While it is against the law for employers to treat pregnant employees less favorably, the LAD Act does not explicitly list pregnancy as a protected class. Additionally, this bill would make it unmistakably clear that employers must make reasonable adjustments, such as a stool to sit on or a schedule change, when workers require them because of pregnancy. Employers would be prevented from penalizing workers in terms, conditions or privileges of employment for requesting or using the accommodations.

The Assembly's action follows that of the State Senate, which passed the bill on November, 18, 2013. The legislation, if signed into law by Governor Chris Christie, will provide important protections to counter an increase in discriminatory practices and treatment for the growing number of pregnant women in the workplace.

A significant percentage (64%) of New Jersey women remain in the workforce while pregnant.ⁱ Over 72,000 working women in our state gave birth over a 12-month period, according to US Census Bureau information from 2011. There are more pregnant workers than ever before and they are also working later into their pregnancies.ⁱⁱ Reports of pregnancy discrimination are also on the rise. Nationally, the number of claims filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has been steadily increasing over the past 15 years. In 2011, 5,797 pregnancy discrimination claims were filed with the EEOC, and \$17.2 million was paid out by employers to settle those claims.ⁱⁱⁱ

The [New Jersey Time to Care Coalition](#) supports this important step forward in providing workplace protections for working women who find it either financially necessary or who simply choose to continue working while pregnant. Principles of non-discrimination should be accepted as an essential part of protecting the entire workforce. Swift action by Governor Chris Christie to make this bill become law will help end pregnancy discrimination in New Jersey.

New Jersey Time to Care Coalition is a broad-based group of community, advocacy, union, religious, research, and academic organizations working to support policies that strengthen communities by ensuring that working families can balance their responsibilities at home and on the job.

ⁱ http://go.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/PWFA_Census_Data_Chart_Fact_Sheet.pdf?docID=11321

ⁱⁱ <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p70-128.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/pregnancy.cfm>