



KATY TANG
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**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IS EXPECTED TO PASS LACTATION IN THE WORKPLACE
POLICY INTRODUCED BY SUPERVISOR KATY TANG**

Ordinance supports mothers returning to the workplace who wish to continue to breastfeed and sets high standards for departmental compliance

Today the Board of Supervisors is expected to vote unanimously to pass legislation authored by Supervisor Katy Tang that creates a policy to help city employees transition back to work after having a child. The Lactation in the Workplace Policy will provide new mothers with lactation accommodations and encourage flexibility in the workplace. The legislation is co-sponsored by all eleven members of the Board of Supervisors.

“Our lactation policy will help new mothers returning to work who want to provide the best for their children,” said Supervisor Tang. “If we are going to ask women to return to work so soon after having a child, we must support this with strong policies that enhance their ability to continue breastfeeding through their child’s first year and beyond.”

Supervisor Tang’s legislation requires the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to develop a general lactation in the workplace policy for all city departments. At the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee meeting last week, a representative from DHR shared that the policy had already been drafted and has an emphasis on flexibility, allowing employees to utilize normal paid breaks and meal times, but also permits a mother to request additional unpaid break time, or use vacation time for pumping, if available. DHR also conducted a survey of city departments on current practices and will be working directly with individual departments to craft policies specific to the work environments and needs of their employees.

Current federal and state laws regarding lactation require reasonable unpaid break time, and a private (non-bathroom) space near the employee’s workspace. However, Supervisor Tang’s legislation will go further and sets a higher standard for lactation space including: a private room with a door that can be locked, at least one electrical outlet, comfortable seating, adequate lighting, and other amenities including a refrigerator, a sink, and one or more hospital-grade electric breast pumps.

“Many working mothers are unaware of their legal rights regarding lactation in the workplace, and this new policy will go a long way to ensuring all city employees know not only how to request lactation accommodation in their department, and but also where lactation rooms are located throughout city facilities,” said Dr. Emily Murase, SFUSD Board Member and Director of the Department on the Status of Women. “This is an important opportunity for the City to be a leader in gender equitable and family friendly workplaces.”

Sixty percent of women with children under the age of three are employed, but only 16 percent of women exclusively breastfeed six months after giving birth, according to a 2013 Centers for Disease Control (CDC)



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report. The statistic is even lower for working moms. According to another CDC report published in 2005, only 10 percent of mothers who work full-time breastfeed their baby until their sixth month.

“We are so pleased that the City and County of San Francisco is continuing to take the lead in supporting working parents,” said Sharon Terman, Director of the Work & Family Program at Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center. “The Lactation in the Workplace Policy will reduce stress among nursing employees, help them breastfeed longer, and improve their children’s health and wellbeing.”

Supervisor Tang’s ordinance will also require departments managing new city building or renovation projects to consult with DHR to ensure there is sufficient space identified for lactation to accommodate the number of employees anticipated to work there. To address situations where departments lack space or where women work in non-office settings, Supervisor Tang advocated for funding to install pre-fabricated lactation pods that provide private space for pumping or nursing, and that contain seating, adequate lighting and an outlet.

“This new policy will ensure our employees feel confident and supported when returning to the workplace, and that they have the option to continue to provide their child with the healthiest and most affordable food for babies, which is breastmilk,” said Supervisor Tang. “I look forward to continuing the work to make the City and County of San Francisco a family friendly employer.”

The new lactation policy will be distributed to all new employees, and to all employees who request parental leave prior to their going on leave. Additionally, DHR will add a webpage to their existing website containing information about the benefits of breastfeeding and the location of all city lactation rooms available to employees.

For more information, please contact Supervisor Katy Tang’s office at (415) 554-7460 or Katy.Tang@sfgov.org.

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