



To: Members of the Judiciary Committee
From: Jackie D. Igafo-Te'o, Community Liaison
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan's Healthy Children Project
Re: Organizational Statement in Support of HB 5515
Date: December 2, 2009

On behalf of the Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan's Healthy Children Project, I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 5515.

As a mother of three, I have always been concerned with nutrition and how it affects the developing brain. Children are young, fragile and innocent. It is our duty as parents to protect them and to provide them with the nourishment they need to grow and thrive.

From the moment a woman finds out that she is expecting a child, she is flooded with advice from every direction. Most expectant moms hear phrases like "breast milk is best", "never let a baby sleep on its stomach", and "use rear facing car seats for infants." Thanks to science and experience, we know that this is all good, sound advice. But the most important thing that a new mom can do for her baby is to provide him with good nutrition from the inside out.

"We know that breast milk and formula carry contaminants. Breast milk, however, gives a newborn baby both immediate and permanent immunities to many infections, allergies and diseases, even including some immunity to the negative impact of toxic chemicals carried in the mother's milk. Breast milk is a nutritious live liquid that also benefits brain development, intimate bonding between mother and baby, and visual and hearing capabilities. Breast-fed infants have lower rates of hospital admissions, ear infections, diarrhea, rashes, allergies, and other medical problems than bottle-fed babies" (from the publication Clean and Green: Your Healthy Home and Family, pg. 5; <http://www.ldaofmichigan.org/cleanandgreen.pdf>).

Based on this knowledge, shouldn't we promote and encourage this common sense practice in our state, and in conjunction, shouldn't we allow breastfeeding mothers the freedom to do so no matter where they are in their community without question? We are asking you to pass legislation as soon as possible that will allow this to happen.

Thank you.

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