

My name is Sara Dale-Bley, writing today in support of HB 15-1258 as President of the Colorado Lactation Consultant Association and as a private practice lactation consultant in Denver.

Our society has made great strides in encouraging families to breastfeed, from the US Surgeon General with sweeping calls to action, down to local mother-to-mother support. However, even with all of the rhetorical and grassroots action, only 25.8% of Colorado babies are exclusively breastfed at 6 months old. Why? It's because concrete governmental and societal support of continued breastfeeding is still developing. Passage of HB 15-1258 would be one more way to support the efforts of families as they attempt to provide their children with the best start possible.

Through my work I routinely see families who are newly home from the hospital after the birth of a child, often within the first weeks of the child's life. Even at these very early stages of learning about the newest member of their family, many mothers I support are already racked with fear about their impending return to work. I've worked with mothers who need to return work within a week or two of giving birth because their families are unable to pay their bills without both parents collecting a paycheck.

Breastfeeding is a learned skill, and for mothers and children to learn how to breastfeed effectively and painlessly, it often takes a great deal of support, effort, and most of all time. On average, it takes 6 to 8 weeks for a breastfeeding dyad to achieve an established, successful breastfeeding relationship.

As a society, we collectively agree that families should breastfeed to ensure optimal health and well-being for their children. But, to see that stance through to fruition, we must provide families with the tools that enable them to realistically apply the education and messaging they're receiving about breastfeeding. HB 15-1258 will ensure that Colorado families have the "tincture of time" that sees many of them through to reaching their breastfeeding goals.

Sara Dale-Bley,
International Board Certified Lactation Consultant,
Registered Lactation Consultant

Snd74@me.com :: (303) 307-8500