

HOUSE No. 4217

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Harriett L. Stanley

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

relative to maternity patients' rights.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Harriett L. Stanley

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

2nd Essex

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 2257 OF 2007-2008.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT RELATIVE TO MATERNITY PATIENTS' RIGHTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 WHEREAS, scientific data demonstrates that breastfeeding is the best form of infant nutrition and
2 provides certain health benefits for both mothers and children;

3 WHEREAS the Surgeon General and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that most
4 babies be exclusively fed with breast milk for the first 6 months of life, and continue on with breast milk
5 through the first year of life;

6 WHEREAS, the U.S. government's Healthy People 2010 goals seek to increase the percentage of
7 women initiating breastfeeding to 75 percent and still continuing to breastfeed when their baby is six
8 months of age to 50 percent;

9 WHEREAS, the effort to increase breastfeeding rates is a shared responsibility among government,
10 family, community, workplace, healthcare professionals, and the public and private sectors;

11 WHEREAS, a mother's decision about how she feeds her baby is personal and it is every mother's
12 right to choose the best feeding options for their babies and themselves, given their life circumstances;

13 WHEREAS, iron-fortified infant formula is a safe and recommended alternative to breast milk within
14 the first twelve months of life.

15 The General Court hereby finds that it shall protect the ability of mothers to receive complete and
16 balanced information on all infant feeding options available before giving birth, in the hospital and after
17 leaving the hospital. Further, the General Court finds it is every mother's right to choose the best feeding
18 options for their babies and themselves.

19 Section 70E of Chapter 111 of the General laws, as appearing in the 2004 Official Edition, is hereby
20 amended by inserting, after the 7th paragraph, the following new paragraph:—

21 Every maternity patient, at the time of admission, shall have the right to be informed and receive
22 complete information and materials, support and counsel from an admitting hospital on all infant feeding
23 choices. When a maternity patient chooses a method of infant feeding, said choice shall be supported and
24 counseled. Health care providers and maternity patients shall have access to infant feeding materials and
25 educational information, including, but not limited to, breast pumps, feeding supplies and bottles, infant
26 formula samples and preparation instructions. Further, sample formula and formula equipment shall be
27 distributed to a breastfeeding maternity patient only when an individual physician order is written or on
28 request of the maternity patient.