



Emily M. Murase, PhD
Director

City and County of San Francisco
DEPARTMENT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



Edwin M. Lee
Mayor

May 17, 2017

The Honorable Katy Tang
City Hall, Legislative Chamber, Room 250
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: File # 170240 – Police, Building Codes – Lactation in the Workplace

Dear Supervisor Tang:

The San Francisco Department on the Status of Women strongly supports File # 170240 (Tang), which would require San Francisco employers to provide employees breaks and a safe, clean location with certain standards for lactation. The Commission on the Status of Women voted unanimously to support the legislation at its April 26, 2017 meeting.

The contents of the ordinance are supported by evidence from healthcare providers and researchers, along with firsthand experiences from mothers themselves. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that mothers breastfeed exclusively for 6 months and that breastfeeding continues until the baby is at least one year old. According to the National Institute of Child Health, breastfeeding results in fewer illnesses and infections, better infant survival rates, decreased allergies, and reduced risk of Type I diabetes among babies. According to the California Department of Public Health, 97% of San Francisco women initiate breastfeeding while in the hospital. Six months after giving birth, only 19% of mothers throughout the country exclusively breastfeed, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Along with the numerous health advantages for babies, mothers also benefit from breastfeeding. Health benefits for mothers include an earlier return to pre-pregnancy weight and reduced risk of maternal postpartum depression, Type II diabetes, osteoporosis, and several cancers. This ordinance will provide nursing mothers the ability to sustain their milk supply and avoid discomfort by expressing their milk at intervals and lengths of time that are comfortable for them, increasing the likelihood that they will breastfeed for the recommended 6 months or longer. We support the empowerment of women and the creation of healthy families, and thus are proud to support the Lactation in the Workplace Ordinance.

Sincerely,

Emily M. Murase, PhD
Director, Department on the Status of Women

cc: Alisa Somera, Clerk of the Land Use and Transportation Committee