



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Moms Rally at City Hall in Support of Breastfeeding, Celebrate 20th Anniversary of NYS Civil Rights Law Allowing Women to Breastfeed Anywhere They Have the Legal Right to Be

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August 8, 2014

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Today on the steps of City Hall, breastfeeding mothers and families, lactation professionals and advocates from all over New York City participated in the NYC Breastfeeding Leadership Council Annual Breastfeeding Subway Caravan, joined by Deputy Mayor Lilliam Barrios-Paoli and multiple elected leaders, including Sen. Krueger. After the rally, the caravan traveled on the “A” train to Bedford-Stuyvesant’s Restoration Plaza for the Brooklyn Alliance for Breastfeeding Empowerment’s (B.A.B.E.) day-long breastfeeding celebration.

This year, during World Breastfeeding Week and National Breastfeeding Month (August), the NYC Breastfeeding Leadership Council recognized the 20th anniversary of the passage of New York State Civil Rights Law § 79-e, one of the first laws of its kind in the nation, which protects women's right to breastfeed anywhere they have the legal right to be. As is made plain in many recent press reports, there are still those who are unaware of this protection. The Breastfeeding Leadership Council seeks to draw attention to the fact that too many women are still being questioned or harassed for breastfeeding in public.

Among the elected and public officials speaking were:

- Deputy Mayor Lilliam Barrios-Paoli
- State Senator Liz Krueger
- Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
- Councilmember Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.

- Assistant Health Commissioner Aletha Maybank, MD

“Breastfeeding is not a lifestyle choice; it is a public health imperative. According to recent research, it is estimated that if 90% of women breastfed exclusively for 6 months, the U.S. would prevent nearly 900 infant deaths and save \$13 billion each year. We have laws protecting a women’s right to breastfeed in public, but we need to change the societal culture to accept and embrace these rights,” said Theresa Landau, Chairperson, NYC Breastfeeding Leadership Council, Inc.

“Encouraging breastfeeding is one of the simplest, best changes we can make to improve public health,” said Sen. Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan), who has championed pro-breastfeeding legislation and breastfeeding families. “The health benefits both for infants and for their mothers are not in doubt, and while every mother makes her own decision on breastfeeding her infant, we’re here today to raise awareness and make that decision an easy one.”

“As an elected official, I’m enthusiastic about public policies that encourage healthy personal choices. My experience as a father has shown me that breastfeeding is a healthy choice that requires public support. It’s wonderful that New York State has a two decade track record of protecting the right of moms to nurse in public. By celebrating this history, enforcing the law and expanding protections and supports for nursing we will help counteract the negative social messages that too many nursing mothers confront,” said Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr. (D-Brooklyn).

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is commemorated from August 1st – 7th. Each year hundreds of thousands of people from over 170 countries join in celebrating the miracle of mother’s milk. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that babies be breastfed exclusively for the first six months of life. Breastfeeding along with appropriate solid foods should continue for up to two years of age or beyond.