

New Rights for Pregnant Employees on the Horizon

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Legislation that would make it a civil rights violation for an employer to refuse to make “reasonable accommodations” for pregnant employees is nearer to becoming law.

House Bill 8 amends the Illinois Human Rights Act to give pregnant employees a right to reasonable accommodations for conditions related pregnancy, childbirth or pregnancy related medical conditions. The law would apply to full-time, part-time and probationary employees.

Employers that refuse to make reasonable accommodations will be in violation of the Act, unless to do so would cause “undue hardship” on the employer.

As the bill currently reads, “reasonable accommodations” includes:

- providing an accessible work site,
- acquiring or modification of equipment,
- job restructuring, and
- modifying a work schedule

The House recently passed HB8 on a vote of 65-36. The measure is scheduled for hearing before the Senate’s Executive committee on May 7, 2014.

By Diane L. Regan