

Illinois Governor Signs Bill Giving Pregnant Employees New Rights

AUTHOR: SANDBERG PHOENIX

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn has signed a bill that makes it a civil rights violation for an employer to refuse to make “reasonable accommodations” for pregnant employees. The law takes effect Jan. 1, 2015.

Under the new law, employers must make reasonable accommodations if a pregnant employee asks for it, but employers can require documentation from a health care provider. 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.

“Reasonable accommodations” includes:

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

Employers also may not deny employment opportunities or benefits, or take adverse action against an otherwise qualified job applicant based on the need to make reasonable accommodations for known medical or common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.

The law applies to full-time, part-time and probationary employees. The measure was not controversial and passed the Senate 57-0 and the House 115-0.

By Diane L. Regan