

Good morning, my name is Myra Taylor and I am a registered nurse at Allegheny General Hospital, nurse coordinator with Nurses of PA and a proud union member of SEIU Healthcare PA. We stand proudly in support of legislation to offer accommodations for pregnant women and their families.

At my facility, we offer accommodations for pregnant women as well as other protections for workers including: (INCLUDE WHAT PROTECTIONS YOU HAVE - STAFFING GRIDS ETC). We have these standards in our workplace because we have a union. With our brothers and sisters at AGH, we bargain for contracts that offer the protections we need on the job. Unfortunately the tens of thousands of healthcare workers across the state without a union do not have these same protections on the job.

In fact, right in my backyard of Pittsburgh, there are thousands of my sisters in the UPMC system who have been deeply impacted by the lack of accommodations for pregnant women. I want to share the stories of two of these dedicated healthcare workers. The first Sahara Latrice, actually left UPMC because of the need to take care of her baby. She was a "casual" worker so even though she often worked 40 hours she didn't get the benefits of full-time staff. When she gave birth she had to come back 4 days later because she didn't have paid time off and she couldn't afford to be off because the wages are so low, despite enduring incredible pain. She also had to run out to her car whenever she could get a coworker to cover for her so that she could pump because they didn't really give her a break to do that. She had been asking for a day shift, but they'd bring new workers in and give them that shift, so she worked a lot of late nights and the total lack of a consistent schedule is what finally caused her to quit.

But even more egregious is what happened to a housekeeper at UPMC Mercy Hospital. After a miscarriage of twins that required medical care at the hospital, her doctor told that she should take a few weeks off from work, because she wasn't emotionally or physically able to work. Despite providing a doctor's note and paperwork for her employer, after one week her paycheck came back as "zero." Even after back and forth dialogues with her employer, she was forced to use all of her PTO and then had to quickly return to work because UPMC did not recognize her miscarriage as reason for medical leave. Imagine how traumatizing it must be to suffer such an incredible loss and only to be put through the ringer from your own employer. It should come as no surprise that both of these women eventually left their positions.

Stories like these make it clear why it is so important that we pass this legislation to provide reasonable workplace accommodations for pregnant women and new mothers especially in fields like healthcare that are overwhelmingly made up of women, and in direct care - predominantly women of color. For the last century, labor law has left us out, making it difficult for thousands of women to have families and continue in the workforce. It is time for us to take a critical first step towards equity and move this legislation.