



Why is H2257 bad for public health?

What you should know about **H2257**, 'An act relative to maternity patients' rights'

- **This bill creates 'rights' for formula companies, at the expense of moms and babies**
Billed as “an act relative to maternity patients’ rights,” H2257 requires maternity hospitals to stock formula samples and “educational information,” paving the way for hospital-based marketing of brand-name baby formula.
- **Formula marketing in hospitals is bad medicine**
Multiple studies have shown that formula company bags with “educational materials” and samples lead nursing moms to start using formula. This undermines unanimous medical recommendations that babies receive only breast milk for the first six months of life.
- **We all pay a price when moms stop breastfeeding**
Mothers and children face substantial health risks when they cannot breastfeed according to medical recommendations. These health risks, which include maternal breast cancer and diabetes, cost Massachusetts taxpayers millions of dollars a year.
- **Moms who buy formula pay, too**
Formula companies use hospital marketing to establish loyalty to their top-of-the-line brands. Families tend to stick with the baby formula they get from their health care provider, and when they do, they end up spending about \$700 per year above store brands.
- **Massachusetts health care providers don't want to market formula**
Fifteen of the state’s 50 maternity units have banned hospital-based formula marketing, citing ethical concerns. Leading state and national medical organizations oppose the practice. Opponents include the state chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Massachusetts Public Health Association, the American Public Health Association, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- **Don't be duped by the pro-breastfeeding language**
This formula-industry backed bill uses language commonly found in formula company documents. They routinely disguise their efforts to market an unhealthy product by citing product “education,” consumer “rights,” “choice” and “freedom,” yet acknowledge the superiority of breastfeeding in order to give an air of credibility.
- **Mandatory marketing makes bad policy**
By asserting a “patient right” to drug company marketing gimmicks, the bill undermines health care providers. It forces doctors and nurses to promote a product regardless of their professional judgment, and it interferes with the provider-patient relationship.

Vote down the 'formula marketing bill of rights'