



## Memorandum in Support

### **A.2654 (Simotas)/S.120 (Peralta)**

#### ***AN ACT to amend the labor law, the civil service law and the insurance law, in relation to establishing the New York Family Leave Act***

The New York State Association of Licensed Midwives ("NYSALM"), which represents the interests of licensed midwives as well as the welfare of women, children and families **supports the passage of A.2654/S.120**, the New York Family Leave Act (the "Act"). The Act provides for a 12-week paid, benefit protected leave of absence, as well as an additional 12-week unpaid leave of absence, for the birth or adoption of a child

The United States stands alone among industrialized countries in failing to guarantee workers paid family leave for the birth or adoption of a child. When a new child is born or adopted, far too many New Yorkers are forced to take unpaid leave or exit the workforce altogether. Low-income workers and their families are especially vulnerable as they often lack the financial resources necessary to take advantage of unpaid time off. This legislation will offer working families the ability to provide their children with the health and psychosocial benefits associated with parent bonding and breastfeeding.

Infants and parents need to be together immediately after birth or adoption. Infant-parent bonding has a profound effect on a child's medical and mental health outcomes, including lower infant mortality and morbidity rates, as well as lower rates of maternal depression. In addition, it goes without saying that breastfeeding is facilitated by mother-infant proximity; yet 70% of mothers with children work full-time and economic necessity means many mothers to return to work after increasingly short maternity leaves. It should be noted that a substantially larger percentage of women in Western European countries, as compared to the United States, consistently choose to breastfeed and to continue to breastfeed past three months. One of the key differences between Europe and the United States when it comes to breastfeeding are legal protections of paid parental leave.

NYSALM believes that families should have the ability to stay close together in the formative early weeks of life. It serves the physical, emotional and psychological health of the family, with a positive net-effect for society as a whole. NYSALM therefore **SUPPORTS A.2654/S.120**, the New York Family Leave Act.