
Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

Videos:

“New law protecting pregnant workers goes into effect nationwide”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h42GiGBLbJ8> (2:36 minutes)

“Congrats! It’s a Bad Law!”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAhtQbwWnSg> (4:36 minutes)

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
3. The NBC anchor said that the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act requires employers to provide “reasonable accommodations for pregnant women and new mothers.” Do pregnant workers need more accommodations than other workers? Why/Why not?
4. John Stossel compared the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act to the ADA. What is the ADA?
5. The NBC video showed a group of Burger King workers protesting after their co-worker’s request to leave work early due to severe pain was denied. Do you think it’s reasonable for an employer to deny such a request? Why/Why not? In a case like this, should the rules be different for pregnant workers and non-pregnant workers? Why/Why not?
6. John Stossel showed that after the ADA passed, employment of disabled workers dropped. Did this surprise you? Why/Why not?
7. The NBC video said that the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act applies to employers with at least 15 employees. Why does it not apply to employers with fewer employees? Is this a good idea? Why/Why not?
8. In the Stossel video, Vanessa Brown Calder said the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act “does make women more risky and more costly to hire.” Why?

9. In the NBC video, Elizabeth Gedmark said a pregnant employee asked her boss for a water bottle and was denied. Why do you think an employer would deny such a request? Is it reasonable to deny it? Why/Why not?
10. John Stossel said: “The momentum is always for more rules.” What did he mean by this? Is “more rules” a good solution to problems? Why/Why not?
11. According to the NBC video, what are some of the benefits that the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act provides?
12. John Stossel said that the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act incentivizes companies to stay small. Why is this?
13. The advocates for the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act argued that the act provides reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers. Do you agree? Why/Why not?
14. John Stossel and Vanessa Brown Calder argued that the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act incentivizes companies to hire fewer employees, and specifically fewer women. Do you agree? Why/Why not?
15. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from either video that affects your views of this topic?
16. What could you learn about this topic that might affect your view of this debate?
17. What else would you like to learn about this topic?