As joyous as pregnancy news can be, the truth is that the most pervasive form of sex discrimination in the workplace is against women who are mothers or are pregnant. And that's why Babygate is the next step in the revolution around women and work.

"Any mother-to-be who buys What to Expect When You’re Expecting should pick up a copy of Babygate to go with it. It offers indispensable advice to allow working parents to stay on the job and is a blueprint for change in the coming work-family revolution."

— ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, Princeton University professor and author of Why Women Still Can’t Have It All

In this crucial book, Babygate authors Dina Bakst, Phoebe Taubman, and Elizabeth Gedmark break down the laws on topics across the parenthood spectrum in clear, conversational language, and include a state-by-state guide so readers know how they’re protected (or not) in their hometowns.

As attorneys for A Better Balance, the authors have long advocated for working families, drafting crucial legislation that has effected significant policy change across the country. Babygate empowers families to navigate the workplace during pregnancy and early parenthood. Best of all, it includes success stories that provide hope and a road map for making this country more family friendly.

To arrange an interview, order review copies, or for more information, contact Elizabeth Koke, FP Publicity, at ekoke@gc.cuny.edu or 212-817-7928. For bulk discount/special sales, contact Jisu Kim, FP Sales, at jkim10@gc.cuny.edu or 212-817-7918.
MEET THE AUTHORS WHO ARE CHANGING THE WORKPLACE


PHOEBE TAUBMAN is a senior staff attorney with A Better Balance, where she works to combat discrimination and advance family-friendly public policies at the local, state and federal level. She lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her husband, son, and daughter.

ELIZABETH GEDMARK is a staff attorney and director of the southern office of A Better Balance, and dedicates her time to empowering working families. Originally from Kentucky, she lives in Tennessee with her husband.
Melissa was close to graduating from medical school. She had a new baby and only six and a half weeks of leave before she had to return to her residency program. Melissa asked for twenty minutes of break time every few hours so that she could pump milk for her baby. Her clinic director told Melissa, “If a patient with a colostomy bag can train his bowels to shit at regular hours, then you can train your boobs to pump after-hours.”

“After telling my boss I was pregnant, he started looking for a reason to fire me. He took the power stretcher off my truck and replaced it with a manual one. I saw the power stretcher in the garage, unused and working perfectly, so I put it back on my truck, and used it to transport three patients. He fired me for switching equipment without his permission . . . one week before I was eligible for unemployment.”

“I was pregnant and had horrible morning sickness. I was fired when one day I was driving to work and threw up in the car. I was late to work because I had to change and clean up … I called to let them know, and they told me to come in covered in puke if I had to, but if I was late, [not to] bother coming in.”

A school psychologist was denied tenure after becoming a mother, despite her history of outstanding performance reviews. Her supervisors said they “did not know how [she] could perform [her] job with little ones” and thought it was “not possible for [her] to be a good mother and have this job.”
ARMANDA LEGROS came to A Better Balance when she was six months pregnant. She was sent home without pay indefinitely after bringing in a doctor’s note that recommended she refrain from heavy lifting temporarily while working for a trucking company. Thankfully, with A Better Balance’s help, she was able to get back to work and has become an outspoken advocate for the cause of pregnant workers.

“I was lucky that A Better Balance was able to help me—my employer and I eventually worked out an amicable resolution. I know that most women aren’t so fortunate and aren’t able to find the support they need. If it weren’t for organizations like A Better Balance and legislators willing to stand up for women, there wouldn’t be any help—or possibility of change.”

—ARMANDA LEGROS

DENA ADAMS found A Better Balance while she was struggling to arrange a workable schedule with her employer. After fifteen years at her job, Dena’s boss eliminated her position, and told her to either accept a position with unpredictable weekend and night hours, or leave. Dena was a single mom, with no one to help look after her young daughter. After many attempts to find a solution, Dena lost her job and was unemployed for over a year. A Better Balance provided her with advice, counsel, and support throughout.

“There are a lot of parents out there who have lost their jobs because of childcare but they didn’t have no place to go so they just rolled over. Me, I wanted to fight. So I called everybody that I could find, and A Better Balance is why I’m here today.”

—DENA ADAMS
A Better Balance is a legal team fighting to give American workers the time and flexibility they need to care for their families. We help to ensure that families are treated fairly—not punished—in the workplace.

ABB leads the charge for policies that help families, such as sick leave, family leave, fair and flexible work and stronger legal protections for pregnant workers and caregivers. Although our work benefits families of all income levels, it is low-income families that benefit most. Our efforts help people who work outside and inside the home achieve a better balance between providing for their families and caring for them.

At some point in our lives, we are all likely to be primary caregivers to a child, spouse, parent or other family member, or to need care ourselves.

Caregiving is an issue that affects everyone.
FEW people realize that getting pregnant can mean losing your job. Imagine a woman who, seven months into her pregnancy, is fired from her position as a cashier because she needed a few extra bathroom breaks. Or imagine another pregnant employee who was fired from her retail job after giving her supervisors a doctor’s note requesting she be allowed to refrain from heavy lifting and climbing ladders during the month and a half before her maternity leave: that’s what happened to Patricia Leahy. In 2008 a federal judge in Brooklyn ruled that her firing was fair because her employers were not obligated to accommodate her needs.

We see this kind of case in our legal clinic all the time. It happens every day to pregnant women in the United States, and it happens thanks to a gap between discrimination laws and disability laws.

Federal and state laws ban discrimination against pregnant women in the workplace. And amendments to the Americans With Disabilities Act require employers to provide reasonable accommodations to disabled employees (including most employees with medical complications arising from pregnancies) who need them to do their jobs. But because pregnancy itself is not considered a disability, employers are not obligated to accommodate most pregnant workers in any way.

As a result, thousands of pregnant women are pushed out of jobs that they are perfectly capable of performing—either put on unpaid leave or simply fired—when they request an accommodation to help maintain a healthy pregnancy. Many are single mothers or a family’s primary breadwinner. They are disproportionately low-income women, often in physically demanding jobs with little flexibility.

Thankfully, State Senator Liz Krueger, a Democrat from Manhattan, and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, a Democrat from Sullivan County, have introduced legislation to fill this gap in New York. Their bills—S. 6273 and A. 9114—would require employers to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant women whose health care providers say they need them, unless doing so would be an undue hardship for the employer.

These accommodations could include providing a seat for employees who spend long periods standing, allowing more frequent restroom breaks, limiting heavy lifting or transferring an employee to a less strenuous or hazardous position. As of 2010, seven states, including California, had passed laws requiring private employers to provide at least some accommodations. And they have been used countless times to help pregnant women keep their jobs.

This kind of law is a public health necessity. Without its protections, pregnant women are reluctant to ask for the accommodations they need for their own health and for the health of their unborn children. For many women, a choice between working under unhealthy conditions and not working is no choice at all. In addition, women who can work longer into their pregnancies often qualify for longer periods of leave following childbirth, which facilitates breastfeeding, bonding with and caring
for a new child and a smoother and healthier recovery from childbirth.

Pregnancy-related accommodations also promote economic security for families. Women who are forced early into unpaid leave are set back with lost wages and, when they return to work, with missed advancement opportunities. Women who are let go don’t just lose out on critical income—they must fight extra hard to re-enter a job market that is especially brutal on the unemployed. Worse yet, they often confront a bias against hiring mothers with small children.

Finally, employers might consider that providing accommodations to pregnant workers would even be good for the bottom line, in the form of reduced turnover, increased loyalty and productivity and healthier workers. With minor job modifications, a woman might be able to work up until the delivery of her child and return to work fairly soon after giving birth. If she were forced out instead, her employer would waste time and money finding a replacement. In the worst-case scenario, employers could be responsible for much higher medical costs if their workers were afraid to ask for accommodations and instead continued doing work that endangered their pregnancies.

Three-quarters of women now entering the work force will become pregnant on the job, yet gaps in our civil rights laws leave this enormous class without the right to the modest accommodations that would protect them. New York’s Legislature should pass this law as soon as possible, and other states should follow. No pregnant woman in this country should have to choose between her job and a healthy pregnancy.

Dina Bakst, a lawyer, is a founder and president of A Better Balance: The Work and Family Legal Center.
PLACED ON UNPAID LEAVE, A PREGNANT EMPLOYEE FINDS HOPE IN A NEW LAW

By RACHEL L. SWARNS

The New York Times

Published February 2, 2014

FLORALBA Fernandez Espinal rose at 6:50 that morning. For the first time in weeks she felt no misgivings about going to work, no anxieties about her pregnancy.

The letter from her obstetrician was going to make everything all right.

For two years, Ms. Fernandez has worked at Unique Thrift, a national chain of thrift shops with a store in the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx. Day in and day out, she has carried heavy piles of clothing — coats, jeans, dresses, blouses — from the storeroom to the showroom, where they are hung on racks.

But Ms. Fernandez is three months pregnant now. She had a miscarriage last year and feared that her unborn child might be at risk. She had seen other workers transferred temporarily to different positions — working the cash register or tagging and hanging clothing — and asked if she could do the same.

Bring in a doctor’s note, her boss said.

So on Jan. 9, Ms. Fernandez packed the note in her lunch bag. She handed it in before she took off her coat, before she clocked in, before she pulled on the burgundy apron she wears on the job. The letter from her doctor at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital was clear: “No lifting, pushing or carrying heavy objects or loads.”

She said her manager took the letter and told her to get to work. Ms. Fernandez did what she was told. It was her first inkling that something might be wrong.

On Thursday, a new law, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, took effect in New York City. You haven’t heard about it? That’s not surprising. When former Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg signed it into law in October, it received scant attention from the news media. Maybe that’s because it seemed like a no-brainer.

After all, everyone knows that a pregnant employee might need temporary accommodations, right? She might need a stool to sit on if she works as a cashier. She might need to telecommute if she’s a lawyer on bed rest. She might need to take frequent bathroom breaks or keep a water bottle at her desk.

So a law requiring companies to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers — so long as the accommodations don’t cause undue hardship for the employer — might not have sounded groundbreaking, particularly in professional circles.

But in these uncertain economic times, the law can mean the difference between having a job and not having one, between paying your bills and falling hopelessly behind.

Ms. Fernandez never imagined such a law was necessary. She is 22 with a young immigrant’s optimism and silver braces that gleam when she smiles. Born in the Dominican Republic, she dreams of going to college and becoming a teacher someday.

In the meantime, she was grateful to earn $8 an hour at Unique Thrift. But three hours after she brought in the doctor’s note, her supervisor told her to go home. She
was being placed on unpaid leave because she could no longer do her job.

Stunned, Ms. Fernandez went to gather her things. Then the young woman, who is active in a local union, decided to document the conversation and turned on the digital recorder in her cellphone.

“But the only thing that they are saying in the letter is that I can’t do heavy lifting,” Ms. Fernandez can be heard saying on the recording.

“But the thing is that here everything, you know that everything here has to done,” responded the supervisor, saying Ms. Fernandez could return when she could work without restrictions.

Ms. Fernandez, who has experience as a cashier in the store, said she walked out and burst into tears: “How do they expect me to pay rent, to buy food?”

At first, her representatives at the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union were stumped. They consulted their lawyers. They said they spoke to the store manager, who refused to relent. They finally learned about the new law from Dina Bakst, co-president of A Better Balance, a legal advocacy group.

On Thursday, Ms. Bakst and her co-counsel, Larry Cary, sent Unique Thrift a letter, demanding Ms. Fernandez’s reinstatement with back pay and accommodations for her pregnancy.

Dave Kloeber, the company president, declined to discuss the case, but said his firm did not tolerate discrimination and continued to “have many pregnant employees on its active work force.”

The company’s lawyer plans to meet with Ms. Bakst and Mr. Cary this week.

Friends have told Ms. Fernandez that someone else has her job now, a sign, they say, that no one expects her to return. But about two weeks ago, she had her first sonogram. The sight of her unborn baby filled her with joy and hope.

“It’s not right what they did,” Ms. Fernandez said, “but I think everything will turn out all right.”

Stay tuned.
A BETTER BALANCE IN THE MEDIA

A Pregnant Worker, Forced Go on Unpaid Leave, Is Back On the Job
By RACHEL L. SWARNS
The New York Times
Published February 2, 2014

AS readers of “The Working Life” column know, Floralba Fernandez Espinal was forced out of her job at a thrift store in the Bronx last month because she was pregnant and could no longer do heavy lifting.

Now, thanks to the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, which took effect in January, after nearly two months without work, Ms. Fernandez is back on the job and rejoicing over her victory.

The law requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers, so long as those accommodations don’t cause undue hardship for the employer; Ms. Fernandez’s case was one of the first tests of the law. After several rounds of negotiations with her union representatives and lawyers, the thrift store’s management agreed to reinstate Ms. Fernandez in a light-duty capacity, which was what her obstetrician had ordered. This week, she has been pricing and hanging clothing instead of hauling heavy piles of clothing from the storeroom to the showroom as she was required to do in the past. Her employer, Unique Thrift, is a national chain of thrift shops with a store in the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx.

Unique Thrift also agreed to give Ms. Fernandez $1,088 in back pay, to maintain her level of seniority at the company and to comply with all of the requirements of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, her lawyers said.

Ms. Fernandez, who earns $8 an hour and has worked at Unique Thrift for about two years, desperately needs the back pay, her union representatives said. During her time out of work, she struggled to pay her bills. Ms. Fernandez, who is 22 and four and a half months pregnant, had to borrow money from her family to buy groceries, and her boyfriend, a livery taxi driver, worked double shifts to help pay rent and utilities.

Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which represented Ms. Fernandez, praised her for “the courage to pursue her rights.”

Dina Bakst, co-president of a Better Balance, a legal advocacy group, represented Ms. Fernandez along with Larry Cary in the negotiations with Unique Thrift. She said she hoped that Ms. Fernandez’s victory “will give other pregnant women in New York City, especially those in low wage and physically demanding jobs, the courage to stand up for what they need to stay healthy and on the job.”

In a statement, Unique Thrift’s management declined to discuss the specifics of Ms. Fernandez’s case, but said the company “has had, and will continue to have, many pregnant employees on its active work force.”
WHEN she was seven months pregnant, Tiffany Beroid’s feet started to swell. Her blood pressure began swinging wildly, and dizzy spells hit unpredictably. That made it hard to keep doing her job as a customer service manager at a Wal-Mart in Laurel, Md., which requires pitching in wherever help is needed, pushing carts, lifting boxes, making sure all the registers cash out.

Beroid got a doctor’s note saying she needed to take it easy -- but, she says, bosses told her they didn’t have any light-duty work.

“It was kind of frustrating, because I couldn’t be a cashier or a greeter who sat on a stool from time to time,” says, Beroid, 29, while playing with her wide-eyed toddler, Ameyah. “At that point I would’ve taken it, even if it was a pay cut, but I wasn’t given that option. They basically told me I would have to take my pregnancy leave now.”

With no work, Beroid couldn’t afford tuition payments for her community college nursing program, which meant missing the final exam; she’ll have to take the class over. Her husband, a security guard, pulled 18-hour shifts to keep paying the rent. Meanwhile, Beroid started networking on Facebook with other women who’d had similar experiences, and was contacted by a labor union-backed workers group called OUR Walmart that made her a poster child for a campaign on pregnant workers’ rights.

Finally, in early March, Wal-Mart quietly overhauled its pregnancy policy, in a shift that might have changed things for Beroid and could still ease the way for hundreds of thousands of its other female employees who could have babies down the road.

Such problems certainly aren’t unique to Wal-Mart. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission received 5,797 pregnancy-related complaints in 2011, from all sectors of the economy; with more women working through pregnancy, employers have been figuring out how to modify their duties as they become more difficult to perform.

But women’s rights groups say they hadn’t encountered any large employer with a pregnancy policy so unfriendly to women as Wal-Mart’s. And anytime the world’s biggest retailer changes how it treats its workforce -- especially women, with whom the company has a fraught history -- the rest of the industry tends to take notice.

Under the original policy, pregnant women could only qualify for a change in their work environment that was “both easily achievable and which will have no negative impact on the business,” which would not include “creating a job, light duty or temporary alternative duty, or reassignment.” That meant they weren’t entitled to the same consideration a disabled person with comparable handicaps would receive.

In January 2013, a group called A Better Balance wrote to Wal-Mart
arguing that the policy violated the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 1978 Pregnancy Discrimination Act. And besides, they say allowing pregnant women to do easier jobs, rather than taking early leaves of absence, can make a big difference.

“Really what’s a very minor fix has huge implications for the health of the women and the baby, and for a family’s economic stability,” says A Better Balance’s co-president Dina Bakst. “Many companies just say it’s a smart thing.”

Wal-Mart responded a year later with a letter stating its policy was perfectly legal, and would not be changing.

But a few days after that, women’s groups helped file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on behalf of a pregnant employee whose supervisor refused to relieve her of duty climbing ladders with heavy boxes, even after she came with a doctor’s note explaining the work could be harmful. A month later, two Wal-Mart shareholders -- who also work at Wal-Mart -- filed a proposal with the Securities and Exchange Commission requesting that the policy be changed.

On March 5th, the company issued a new policy, which says that women “may be eligible for reasonable accommodation” if because of a “temporary disability caused by pregnancy” they “need assistance to apply for a new job, or to perform the essential functions of a job.” In theory, that means that pregnant Wal-Mart employees are more likely to be given less physically demanding work if they’re having difficulty carrying out their duties.

Wal-Mart says the activists didn’t force it to do anything. “Our previous policies met or exceeded state and federal law. Now with our new policy, we’re going above what the law requires,” says spokesman Randy Hargrove. “We believed it was the right decision for our associates, and we made it.”

Still, a slew of women’s and labor groups said in a letter to Wal-Mart yesterday that the new

Figure 4.

Working During Pregnancy

Working After Birth

For information on sampling and nonsampling error, see <www.census.gov/sipp/sourcecat/S&AO8_W105W92285&A-12929.pdf>.

policy isn’t good enough. Even though the company insists that the policy covers accommodation a worker might need in the course of a healthy pregnancy as well as a disability due to complications, advocates worry that the phrasing doesn’t make it explicit.

“Our concern is that the word ‘disability’ can be a tricky word,” says Emily Martin, general counsel for the National Women’s Law Center. “It invites a lot of frankly ridiculous conversations about whether the medical accommodation you received is based on the pregnancy itself, or illnesses associated with the pregnancy.”

But was either the old or the new policy illegal? That’s a matter of debate. Courts have generally sided with employers -- including Wal-Mart -- in their narrow interpretations of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act.

In 2012, for example, an appeals court dismissed charges from a woman who had miscarried twice after Wal-Mart declined to create easier jobs for her, since she’d failed to demonstrate that she’d been treated any differently than someone with a regular disability. It’s very difficult to prove discrimination if you have to produce a person in the exact same circumstance who got more help.

According to University of Dayton employment discrimination expert Jeanette Cox, both of Wal-Mart’s policies would likely hold up in court -- which illustrates a weakness in the law itself.

“Their policy is written in such a way that complies with federal law,” Cox says. “It’s just that the federal law sucks.”

In large part, that’s because the employer has wide latitude to decide the meaning of words, like the ones that appear in Wal-Mart's new policy. “Its impact presumably will depend upon what the employer considers a ‘reasonable’ accommodation and how ‘disability’ is interpreted,” says University of Pennsylvania Law School professor Serena Mayeri.

In addition, a worker’s experience always depends on the individual store; Wal-Mart furnished two employees who spoke glowingly about how they were treated while going through complicated pregnancies.

“At times it was difficult, but I let my management know that I was pregnant, and right away, they attended to me, they always went out of their way to make sure I was doing okay,” says Stephanie Alvarado, who had been working for Wal-Mart in San Diego for about a year before giving birth. “Any limitations I had they would accommodate, they went above and beyond.” (She didn’t have enough hours to qualify for Wal-Mart’s health insurance, though; California’s insurance program for low-income workers covered her month-long hospital stay.)

The company’s new policy, however, doesn’t necessarily guarantee that everyone will be treated like Alvarado. Since 2012, legislation has been pending in Congress that would largely resolve that uncertainty, making it illegal to not accommodate pregnant workers and directing the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to define what that means. The bill has 121 cosponsors, but hasn’t yet made it out of committee.*

* Corrected to reflect the fact that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has not taken a position on the bill.
January 23, 2013

Jeffrey J. Gearhart
Executive Vice President
General Counsel and Corporate Secretary
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
702 Southwest 8th Street
Bentonville, AR 72712

Dear Mr. Gearhart,

A Better Balance is a non-profit legal organization that advocates for the rights of pregnant workers and other employees facing family responsibilities discrimination at work. We are writing because it has come to our attention that Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (“Wal-Mart”) has in place an outdated policy regarding pregnant workers in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (“ADAAA”) and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (“PDA”).

First, we have reason to believe that Wal-Mart has a policy of not accommodating pregnancyrelated disabilities because Wal-Mart considers pregnancy to be temporary and therefore, not eligible for accommodation. This policy of not accommodating temporary impairments is in violation of the ADAAA, which amended the Americans with Disabilities Act. See 29 C.F.R. § 1630.2(j)(ix) (“The effects of an impairment lasting or expected to last fewer than six months can be substantially limiting within the meaning of this section.”). Additionally, although a condition may be linked to pregnancy, it can still be considered a disability. See 29 C.F.R. § 1630, app. (1630.2(h)) (“a pregnancy-related impairment that substantially limits a major life activity is a disability”). For example, pregnant workers with gestational diabetes or hypertension must be accommodated. These regulations were promulgated on March 25, 2011.

Wal-Mart might have been operating under the old Americans with Disabilities Act, before it was amended in 2008. We suggest that you update Wal-Mart’s policy to clarify that it applies not only to those with longer-term impairments, but also those employees with pregnancy-related disabilities.

Second, we have reason to believe that Wal-Mart maintains a policy of treating pregnant workers worse than other workers, such as those with non-pregnancy related disabilities. Because of newly promulgated regulations clarifying Congressional intent, it is now clear to advocates and legal
scholars that the ADAAA has raised the floor for all workers. The PDA requires employers to treat pregnant workers the same as other workers who are similarly situated. See 42 U.S.C. § 2000e(k). Because employers must now provide reasonable accommodations to a much wider group of workers, including those who are only temporarily disabled, employers must also provide reasonable accommodations to all pregnant workers, including those with healthy pregnancies who are limited in their ability to work. For example, a man who injures his back and can no longer lift more than twenty pounds would have to be accommodated under the ADAAA. Since Wal-Mart would be accommodating this employee, Wal-Mart would also have to accommodate a pregnant woman who also had a twenty-pound lifting restriction. This ensures that pregnant workers are not treated worse than other workers. Congressional leaders have also introduced the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act in the House and Senate, which would make this legal protection explicit.

We applaud Wal-Mart’s recent efforts to be a more forward-thinking company, such as committing to hiring veterans, but Wal-Mart can do much more. Wal-Mart should become a corporate leader in supporting pregnant workers on the job, which will most likely be required of all American companies soon. You should update your policy not only because it is the right thing to do for the health of your pregnant workers, but also because it is a smart business practice. An updated policy will be more likely to withstand judicial scrutiny and is a smart Equal Opportunity in Employment practice. Finally, accommodations have been shown to reduce turnover and boost productivity.

Please call us at 212-430-5982 or email dbakst@abetterbalance.org if you have any questions or would like assistance in drafting a new policy.

Thank you,

Dina Bakst
Co-Founder & Co-President,
A Better Balance
What inspired the formation of A Better Balance?

Based on my experience as a women’s rights attorney and mother of two young daughters, I felt a strong need to create a legal advocacy organization dedicated to advancing laws and policies that allow workers, especially pregnant women and new mothers, to care for their families without jeopardizing their economic security. American laws and workplace policies have failed to keep up with the modern workforce. Many workers, especially low-income mothers, face an impossible choice between their jobs and their families. For too many women, having a baby spells job loss. Women cannot, and will not, be equal until they are treated fairly, and not punished in the workplace, when they are pregnant or become a mother.

What are some of the most common challenges that pregnant women face in the workplace?

Many pregnant workers are blessed with supportive bosses. However, others face hostility and negative treatment after they break the big news. They face assumptions about their ability and commitment to their jobs. Women in low-wage and physically demanding jobs suffer most: they’re often forced off the job when they request a modest, temporary workplace accommodation to continue safely working. This is shameful—no pregnant worker should be forced to choose between her job and a healthy pregnancy!

In addition, most pregnant women face challenges understanding and navigating their rights during pregnancy, leave and upon return to work. Babygate seeks to fill this gap, informing and empowering individuals to keep their jobs and care for their families.
Why do you think that the issue of pregnancy discrimination is not talked about more widely?

After publication of my 2012 *New York Times* op-ed, “Pregnant and Pushed Out of a Job,” Congress responded and introduced the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. Although the issue is gaining more attention than ever, it’s not enough. The mainstream media is far more focused on individual solutions, rather than systemic barriers to women’s advancement. The needs of low-wage women are often invisible to professional workers, including reporters.

What kind of information and resources will readers find in *Babygate*? Who do you want to read this book?

*Babygate* fills a gap in the literature and answers a need by providing a user-friendly tool for pregnant women, mothers and fathers to understand how the law protects them at work and what to do in the face of discrimination. The book tackles complex legal concepts in plain English so non-lawyers have a comprehensive, state-by-state, “one-stop shop” to help them navigate their legal rights at work. *Babygate* engages readers with practical tips, tools, and real-life examples of other women’s experiences, making this book instructive and inspirational.

To arrange an interview, order review copies, or for more information, contact Elizabeth Koke, FP Publicity, at ekoke@gc.cuny.edu or 212-817-7928. For bulk discount/special sales, contact Jisu Kim, FP Sales, at jkim10@gc.cuny.edu or 212-817-7918.