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Get Behind the Latest and Greatest Vaccine Safety Legislation

Furthering their strong, positive reputations as vaccine safety activists on Capitol Hill, Representatives Dave Weldon (R. Fla.) and Carolyn Maloney (D. NY) are at it again. The two have just co-introduced bold and far-reaching legislation, called the "Vaccine Safety and Public Confidence Assurance Act of 2006." The bill, also known as H.R. 5887, would reform the ways the Federal government administers vaccine safety regulation, and contains many important improvements to the current methods and protocols. H.R. 5887 has been praised and endorsed by numerous advocacy groups, and stands to:

- Make vaccine safety research and public oversight a high priority for Federal public health agencies
- Require public access to data
- Require transparency in decision-making by government regulators
- Require accountability by the government to the public that it serves
- Require long-term safety monitoring of the vaccine schedule recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.
- Transfer vaccine-safety regulatory functions now conducted by the CDC to a new independent entity, the Agency for Vaccine Safety Evaluation ("AVSE")
- Require that those who monitor vaccine safety and conduct vaccine research must be free of conflicts of interest
- Place oversight of the Vaccine Safety Datalink, the nation's primary resource for vaccine safety information, under the newly created AVSE. This change will assure the public that analysis and reporting of vaccine safety will be unbiased
- Require the vaccine industry to conduct post-marketing surveillance of adverse reaction to vaccines, a measure that will correct the inadequate testing that currently prevails
- Create an Advisory Council that gives significant participation in the administration of vaccine safety to parties outside the government regulatory bureaucracy
- Provide that membership on the Advisory Council by those most affected by vaccine safety policy: vaccine-injured individuals and their parents.

[Click here](#) to tell your representatives in Congress that you support this important legislation, and that you are counting on them to do the same.

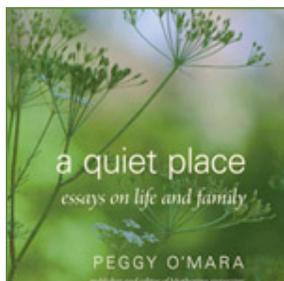
Join the Triple-header of Breastfeeding Celebrations

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) takes place annually in 120 countries on various dates, to celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Innocenti Declaration on the

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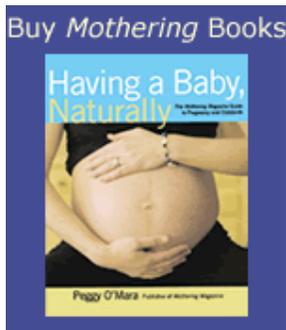
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Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding. In the US, this annual pro-breastfeeding event occurs August 1-7, and this year, WBW also commemorates two additional major lactivism-related milestones: the 25th anniversary of the The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (also known as "The Code,") and La Leche League International's 50th anniversary.

- **The Innocenti Declaration** was produced and adopted in 1990 by participants at the WHO/UNICEF meeting on "Breastfeeding in the 1990s: A Global Initiative." The document lists the benefits of breastfeeding, plus global and governmental goals.
- **The Code** was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1981, and is an international public health recommendation which seeks to give women pure facts about feeding their babies, free of aggressive infant formula marketing influences, so that mothers can make well informed feeding decisions. Marketing refers to all promotional activities by manufacturers and distributors, from advertising and labeling to their relations with health workers and their associations.
- **La League International** helps mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, education, information, and encouragement and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother.

For details on events in your own community, check with your local La Leche group, or check out their [online WBW info](#).

Crafting a Simple Measure to Help Babies

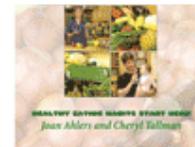
Baby caps handcrafted by volunteers from across the country will appear in Washington, D.C. early next year, reminding America's leaders that simple, inexpensive solutions can save millions of newborn lives. [Save the Children](#), a global humanitarian organization and the [Warm Up America! Foundation](#), a charity dedicated to providing knitted and crocheted items to people in need, have partnered in this new grassroots effort.

"We know Americans—including knitters and crocheters—care about saving the lives of newborn babies in the developing world," said Charles MacCormack, president and CEO of Save the Children. "This effort gives them a way to act. By making a cap, they can help us save a life. By using their voice, they can help us save millions." After the caps—along with personal notes from the knitters and crocheters who made them—turn heads in D.C., they will be delivered overseas to babies who need them, in developing countries. "It has always been the principal goal of the Foundation to provide warmth to people in need," explains Warm Up America! president Cheryl Gunnells. "It just made sense for the Foundation, with its extensive network of volunteers, to act as a facilitator for this national effort."

The idea for the Caps to the Capital project was spun from knitters and crocheters themselves, who contacted Save the Children after seeing media coverage of its recent State of the World's Mothers 2006 report, released this past May. The report found that the first 24 hours of life are the most dangerous time for babies in the developing world. Of the more than 4 million newborns who die each year, 2 million die within the first 24 hours of life. Several news reports noted that something as simple as a knit cap could help save a baby's life.

The initiative asks volunteer knitters and crocheters to take three steps to save newborn lives before January, 2007: knit or crochet a cap; write the President; and unite for newborns. Download a [Caps to the Capital Action Kit](#) or call 1-800-728-3843 for more information.

Research shows that 70 percent of the 4 million newborn deaths that occur each year could be prevented if mothers and children in poor countries had access to a simple package of health measures. This package includes antibiotics to fight infections, immunizations against tetanus, training for skilled birth attendants, education on breastfeeding and basic care such as drying a newborn baby and keeping it warm (this is where the caps come in). America's leaders could save millions of newborn lives by increasing international assistance for programs that offer these inexpensive



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Lactivism 101

Opportunities for lactivism are abundant in our bottle-feeding culture: last week, we trumpeted the call to join a **nurse-in** at Victoria's Secret stores nationwide. This week, in a case of supreme irony, we've learned that *Mothering's* new July/August issue, with the headline "Why We Need a Breastfeeding Culture," is being covered on some newsstands—it features an **image** of a breastfeeding mother and baby. As long as breastfeeding raises eyebrows—and in the absence of a federal law protecting the right to breastfeed in public—we all have a job to do: to reclaim and normalize this essential human act. Whether it takes the form of a nurse-in, a letter to the editor, a discussion with a store manager, or lobbying on a state level, lactivism can be a positive force, empowering mothers and changing attitudes through education. The following are basic guidelines to consider, when "lactivating":

- **Stop, Look, and Listen:** If you are not personally involved in an immediate confrontation, take the time to find out the whole story—knowing the specifics of a situation gives you a credible platform to appropriately respond from.
 - **Temper Your Passion:** If you *are* involved in an immediate confrontation, you may feel shamed, angry, attacked and overwhelmed—breathing deeply and remembering the situation is about another person's ignorance, *not* about you having done anything wrong, is vital. We communicate most effectively when calm; it may be better (for you and your child) to excuse yourself from a heated scenario and return later to seek resolution.
 - **Stay Civil:** In any event, try to embrace the role of serving as a diplomat on behalf of breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is positive, so stay positive: choose to rise above base reactions and conduct yourself with dignity. Be "the woman who taught something important" as opposed to "the irate breastfeeding mother."
 - **Bark up the Right Tree:** Direct your lactivism to the right person—“one who can affect change. Politely seek out managers, supervisors, or the correct corporate department (such as public relations or customer satisfaction).
 - **Stick with the Facts, Ma'am:** Rather than digressing into a debate of personal values and judgments, focus on the basic truths: the American Academy of Pediatrics, the World Health Organization, and the government all tell mothers to breastfeed. You are being a good mother, and a good citizen, when you breastfeed. Breastfeeding rates are on the rise, and accommodating breastfeeding is a good business strategy.
 - **Don't Go It Alone:** Connect with others and organize to invoke strength in numbers. Alert your local La Leche leader about any breastfeeding incidents, or planned responses. Keep local media outlets abreast as well. The **Lactivism** forum at www.mothering.com is a valuable resource.
 - **Keep The Faith:** Remember, the ultimate goal of lactivism is to restore a breastfeeding culture, by helping to remedy ignorance and misunderstanding. In addition to high-profile responses to unfortunate incidents, lactivism is also an everyday event—talking with critical family members, befriending other breastfeeding mamas, and even the normal, natural act of breastfeeding itself are positively transformative in the current climate of breasts=sex and consumerism.
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Don't Miss This Film!

Summer is heating up across the nation, and according to top climatologists, we'd better get used to it. Climate change—also referred to as global warming—is a hot topic (no pun intended), but there is still time to head to a cool, dark theatre near you to view the acclaimed film "An Inconvenient Truth." No matter your politics, we at *Mothering* urge you to spend an hour and forty minutes under the tutelage of Al Gore, who synthesizes and conveys an enormous amount of vital information via the film. "An Inconvenient Truth" is not merely a crash course on the accelerating problem of climate change; it is also a hopeful call to action. See it for yourself! For more information, visit <http://www.climatecrisis.net>.

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