

Message from the Presidents

We are so proud to send you this newsletter that reflects our work over the last year. Our mission – our passion – for insuring that workers never have to sacrifice their economic security in order to care for their families has led to some huge victories. With an incredible staff – and with your help – we really are making a difference in the lives of millions of families in New York City and across the country.

Because of A Better Balance, millions of New Yorkers – and thousands more workers in other states and cities around the country – will have the right to paid sick days to use for themselves or their close family members. Because of A Better Balance, no pregnant worker in

New York City will ever be forced out of her job when she needs a modest accommodation in order to keep safely working. Because of A Better Balance, clinic clients who didn't even realize they had rights have been able to keep their jobs when faced with problems caused by their need to care for their families. Our unique model of working both on the ground, hearing about real problems that families face, and at the policy level, finding solutions to those problems has been extremely effective in making change.

Our successes are your successes. Thank you for your tremendous support of our efforts. We couldn't do any of this without you.

Dina and Sherry

Victories in New York City

Two pieces of legislation championed by A Better Balance were signed into law this year, creating a safer and more equitable workplace for New Yorkers.

On June 27, 2013, the City Council voted 47-4 to override the mayor's veto of the Earned Sick Time Act and pass the bill into law, creating a legal right to sick time for 3.4 million private sector New York City workers across the five boroughs. A Better Balance (ABB) helped to draft the legislation and was a key leader of the four-year campaign. Sherry Leiwant, ABB Co-President and Co-Founder, was also one of four negotiators who reached a compromise with the City Council Speaker on the legislation enabling it to come to a vote. The law will ultimately require employers with 15 or more employees to provide up to 5 paid sick days per year for personal or family health needs and will ensure that even New Yorkers employed by smaller businesses cannot be fired for taking up to 5 days of unpaid sick time a year to care for themselves or an ill family member.



ABB Co-President Dina Bakst standing with Mayor Bloomberg at the signing of the NYC Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

in the New York City Council. This new law will ensure that pregnant women and new mothers across the five boroughs are not pushed out of work when they need a simple modification, like an extra bathroom



ABB Co-President Sherry Leiwant with New York City Council Member Gale Brewer speaking about the importance of Earned Sick Time on the steps of City Hall.

break or a reasonable period to recover from childbirth, in order to stay healthy and on the job. The NYC PWFA is not only an important public health measure; it is critical for the economic security of women and their families. A Better Balance helped to draft the law, organized supporters, and testified in favor of the bill, among other actions.

Transition in New York.

ABB has been part of a "brain trust" suggesting new policies as New York City transitions to a new Mayor and City Council. Dina and Sherry wrote a chapter on "Promoting Work-Family Balance" as part of a compilation of proposals for New York City entitled "Toward a 21st Century City for All" edited by John Mollenkopf of CUNY. That book was widely circulated to the mayoral and city council candidates and forms a policy agenda for the next administration. We have also participated in Talking Transition, a dialogue with the New York community on the future of the city and will be working to insure that our issues are among those addressed by the next administration.

Legal Assistance Around the Country

Paid Sick Time

ABB is the leading national organization that provides legal support to paid sick time campaigns around the country.

We support local and state advocates by providing draft legislation, legal research, and timely answers to questions by legislators, coalition members, and the press. Based on our on-the-ground experience in the New York City paid sick time campaign, we also offer tactical advice and help talk through policy issues with campaigns in other cities and states.

In 2013, we have achieved paid sick days laws in Portland, Oregon—where we are now helping to draft regulations that will implement the law—and Jersey City, New Jersey, as well as New York City. We are currently providing legal support to cities and states throughout the country contemplating paid sick days legislation, including legal advice to the Massachusetts coalition working to put paid sick days on the 2014 ballot.

Pregnancy Discrimination

We continue to be a leader in the coalition that supports the federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. In November, we organized and spoke at a Congressional briefing, “The Pregnancy Discrimination Act at 35 & the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.” Earlier this year, we published a major report with the National Women’s Law Center detailing real stories of pregnancy discrimination victims across the country and making the case for much-needed legislation. The report garnered significant media attention including the *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post* and *LA Times*. ABB is also now one of the go-to organizations for providing assistance in drafting pregnancy discrimination bills around the country. As Wisconsin State Representative Eric Genrich said about ABB: “It goes without saying that we could not have drafted this bill without your expert input.” We have also assisted lawmakers and advocates in Philadelphia, Iowa, Maine, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Maryland.

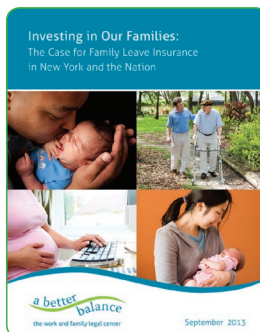
Workplace Flexibility and Government as a “Model Employer” on Work-Family Issues

We provided legal and technical assistance to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors who wanted to enact a law guaranteeing workers the right to request a flexible work schedule, modeled on a law currently in effect in Great Britain. That law was passed in September, 2013.

Based in part on legal research and advice from ABB, the city of Philadelphia recently adopted new parental leave benefits for more than 5,000 non-union municipal workers. All new parents—male or female—are now able to take four weeks of paid parental leave in the first year following the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child; this is a new benefit for the city’s non-union municipal workforce. The new policy in Philadelphia also doubles the amount of additional accrued sick leave birth mothers can use from four to eight weeks.

Paid Family Leave

On July 23rd, Rhode Island became the third state to provide paid leave to workers to bond with a new child or care for a seriously ill family member. A Better Balance helped to draft the bill, which will provide four weeks of paid family leave as well as job protection to workers who take advantage of the program. The program will be financed by small deductions from workers’ salaries.



Family leave insurance is critical for American families, especially as more and more women are entering the workforce and there are fewer nonworking family members to provide care to children and elderly relatives. A Better Balance’s recent report, *Investing in Our Families: The Case for Family Leave Insurance in New York and the Nation* details the need for this essential program among different populations including women, children, LGBT families, the elderly, and businesses, as well as for society as

a whole. Without a right to paid family leave, workers are being forced to make impossible choices between their families and their economic security.

Paid Family Leave in NY

ABB is proud to be a key leader in the effort to make family leave insurance a reality in New York State. In the most recent legislative session, the Family Leave Insurance Act was introduced in both the New York State Assembly and Senate. This legislation would provide workers with up to 12 weeks of paid leave—financed through very small employee payroll contributions—to care for a new child or seriously ill family member. A family leave insurance bill passed the New York State Assembly in 2005 and 2007, and we are hopeful that New York will become the fourth state in the country to guarantee this benefit. Stay tuned for updates as we prepare for a renewed 2014 campaign to pass the Family Leave Insurance Act!

Women’s Equality Agenda

The New York Women’s Equality Coalition, which is comprised of a diverse group of more than 850 labor, religious, business, and women’s

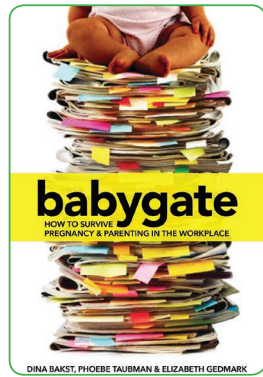
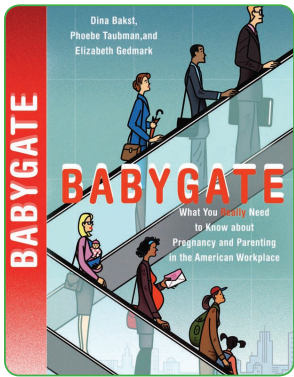


ABB Co-President Dina Bakst speaking to more than a thousand New Yorkers who came out to show support for the Women’s Equality Agenda on June 4th.

rights groups, was formed this year to advance the Women’s Equality Agenda, a groundbreaking 10-point omnibus proposal to promote fairness and equality for the women of New York, including stronger pregnancy discrimination protections. Unfortunately, critical measures will die unless the New York State legislature acts before December 31, 2013, so we are working hard to achieve passage before the end of the year. ABB has been, and continues to be, a leader in the coalition—we are on the Steering Committee and have steadfastly worked toward the passage of these vitally important bills. We will continue as a leader in the coalition as we formulate our 2014 Women’s Equality Agenda—stay tuned!

Babygate

Moms-to-be often get tons of advice about what to eat, which stroller to buy, and how to get their bodies back after baby arrives. What's missing is clear and comprehensive advice on how to keep their jobs during pregnancy and beyond. We wrote **Babygate: What You Really Need to Know About Pregnancy and Parenting in the American Workplace** to spotlight the protections expecting and new parents have (and don't have) in the workplace. Babygate arms readers with valuable tools, including a Zagat-like guide on parents' rights in each state, so they may advocate for themselves on the job. After a successful initial release in May 2013, the book was picked up by the Feminist Press and will be re-released next summer, featuring legal updates and new real-life stories from people we have met through our advocacy.



The original Babygate (left) and the updated edition (right) being released next summer.

LGBT Workers and Families

In recent years, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights in the United States have advanced at a significant pace. Against this backdrop of positive change, however, LGBT workers still face many challenges in the workplace and are often forced to make impossible choices among their jobs, financial security, health, and families. ABB has become a leader on the intersection of LGBT rights and workplace leave issues. In addition to writing a guide for LGBT families about their evolving rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act, we are conducting outreach to the LGBT community on the need for paid leave and advising workplace leave advocates on LGBT-inclusive bill language. This year, ABB released a comprehensive report, **Time for a Change: The Case for LGBT-Inclusive Workplace Leave Laws and Nondiscrimination Protections**, based on our bill drafting experience and research on LGBT workers and their caregiving needs.

Using stories and examples, this report discusses the laws that apply to LGBT workers who need leave for personal health or family caregiving reasons, as well as LGBT-specific gaps in the law. Due to these shortcomings in the law and the demographics of LGBT Americans, the report shows that LGBT workers have a critical need for stronger workplace leave and employment nondiscrimination laws. The report also details how workplace leave laws can expand legal definitions of "family" and serve as a building block for LGBT rights. To build on this report, ABB has organized multiple conference calls and a national "webinar" to bring together LGBT advocates and workplace leave advocates to discuss opportunities for collaboration.

Our Impact

In 2013, our free legal clinic and hotline served and empowered dozens of people by providing information about legal rights, consultations, advice, referrals, and direct representation. For example, we were able to secure thirteen weeks of paid maternity leave for one of our clients who greatly needed financial support while she recovered from childbirth and cared for her newborn baby. But our impact reaches even further than those individuals. This year, ABB found out that one of the largest employers in Brooklyn, SUNY Downstate Hospital, had an outdated policy resulting in pregnant workers being pushed off the job when they were capable of working, but needed an adjustment at work to stay healthy and safe. We demanded that SUNY update their policy so that their pregnant employees could continue working and they complied—changing their policy to the benefit of the entire hospital staff.

Our clinic callers also inspire our policy work by alerting us to gaps in the law, and helping us to persuade legislators with the power of their voices. Armanda Legros was sent home from her job at an armored truck company without pay, indefinitely, after presenting her boss with a doctor's note that advised she temporarily refrain from heavy lifting while pregnant. At the time, she had three months until her due date, had a four-year-old at home and was the primary income earner for her family. "We fell behind in rent and applied for public assistance," Armanda told us. "Two weeks before my due date, I lost my health insurance. We struggled to put food on the table; it was an extremely difficult time." Thanks to ABB and our clinic partners at Outten & Golden, Armanda has her job back and is harnessing her story and her passion as an agent for change. She has created a petition on Change.org that calls on legislators to pass the New York Women's Equality Agenda and end pregnancy discrimination once and for all; the petition already



Armanda Legros, clinic caller telling her story to legislators and advocates to support the NY Women's Equality Agenda.

has more than 2,200 signatures. Armanda also met Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader in the U.S. House of Representatives, while telling her story at an event we co-sponsored earlier this year.

We're Expanding/Southern Office

States in the Southeastern part of the United States represented almost half of all sex discrimination (which includes pregnancy discrimination) charges filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in 2012, even though they only make up one-third of the U.S. population. Unfortunately, despite this great need, there are not enough attorneys and legal teams on the ground available to help families suffering from discrimination at work and to push for more family-friendly laws and policies. ABB is opening a Southern Office, based in Nashville, TN, to help fill this gap in legal advocacy. We have big plans to build our partnerships with communities and partners in the South, raise awareness of the needs of Southern women and families living paycheck to paycheck, and to replicate our successful advocacy model to empower communities in some of the most impoverished parts of the country.

ABB's Annual Spring Celebration!

ABB celebrated its seventh year on May 7, 2013 with more than 150 friends and supporters as we honored Jamie Levitt, Partner at Morrison & Foerster LLP, Honorable Jerrold Nadler, U.S. Congress (D-NY), and Suzanne Riss, Vice President of Marketing and Communications at JP Morgan Chase.

Please **SAVE THE DATE** for next year's event at the Gansevoort Park Avenue on Monday, May 5, 2014.

We need YOU to help us make a more family friendly America. Join us today and make a donation online at <http://www.abetterbalance.org/web/donate/donateonline>

ABB in the Media

Expecting fairness in New York	Dina Bakst, <i>The Times Union</i>	November 2013
The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act: A Victory in New York City	<i>Working Mother</i>	September 2013
NYC Shows the Way on Pregnant Workers' Rights	Dina Bakst, <i>The Huffington Post</i>	September 2013
New York City Passes Law Defending Rights of Pregnant Workers	KJ Dell'Antonia, <i>The New York Times</i>	September 2013
Women's agenda turns to City Council	Chris Bragg, <i>Crain's New York Business</i>	September 2013
What You May Not Expect When You're Expecting	Joan Williams and Katherine Ullman, <i>The Huffington Post</i>	August 2013
Seneca Falls: 165 Years Later and Still Struggling for Equality	Dina Bakst, <i>The Huffington Post</i>	July 2013
When You're the First Pregnant Woman at Your Company	Jessica Grose, <i>The New York Times</i>	July 2013
Laws Fail to Protect Pregnant Women Who Need Special Accommodations on the Job	Diana Reese, <i>The Washington Post</i>	June 2013
Discrimination Against Pregnant Workers Has Been Rising, Report Says	Brigid Schulte, <i>The Washington Post</i>	June 2013
Report: Pregnant Workers Face Routine Discrimination	Stephen Smith, <i>CBS News</i>	June 2013
Eight Reasons That Pregnant Workers Need Protection From Discrimination On The Job	Bryce Covert, <i>ThinkProgress</i>	June 2013
Why Working Class Women Are Better Off Injured Than Pregnant	Dwyer Gunn, <i>Gothamist</i>	June 2013
The Women's Equality Act: A No Brainer for New York	Taina Bien-Aime, <i>Huffington Post</i>	June 2013
Pushed Off the Job While Pregnant	Jennifer Ludden, <i>NPR</i>	June 2013
Krueger: IDC Should Gridlock the Senate for WEA	Casey Seiler, <i>Capitol Confidential</i>	June 2013
Pregnant and Pushed into Poverty	Joanne Goldblum, <i>Huffington Post</i>	June 2013
Sick-Pay Bill is Not "Weak"	Sherry Leiwant, Letter to the Editor, <i>Crain's New York</i>	May 2013
How States Are Leading The Way On Equal Pay For Women	Bryce Covert, <i>ThinkProgress</i>	May 2013
Supporting LGBT Workers and Their Families in Times of Need	Jared Make, <i>Huffington Post</i>	May 2013
La lucha por la igualdad está aún lejos de terminar (The fight for equality is far from finished)	Sherry Leiwant & Janet Gornick, <i>El Diario (op-ed)</i>	May 2013
City Council Approves New York City Paid Sick Leave Legislation	<i>CBS News New York</i>	May 2013
Paid Sick Days for a Million More New Yorkers	Brad Lander, <i>Huffington Post</i>	May 2013
What It's Like To Lose Your Job While Pregnant	Anna North, <i>Buzzfeed</i>	April 2013
Video: The Big Apple's Big Deal on Paid Sick Days	<i>MSNBC Live with Thomas Roberts</i> (Interview with Sherry Leiwant of ABB)	March 2013
Deal Reached to Force Paid Sick Leave in New York City	Michael Barbaro and Michael M. Grynbaum, <i>New York Times</i>	March 2013
Forty Years Behind on Sick-Leave Policy, But Catching Up	Sharon Lerner, <i>The American Prospect</i>	March 2013
Community Conversation: Women and the Workplace	<i>WSKG Public Radio</i> (Radio Interview with Phoebe Taubman of ABB)	March 2013
Letter: Proposal Helps Pregnant Women	Dina Bakst, <i>The Times Union</i>	March 2013
What Women Want: Affordable Child Care	Lisa Sylvester, <i>CNN The Situation Room</i>	March 2013
Coalition: Women's Equality More Than Just Abortion	Casey Seiler, <i>Capitol Confidential</i>	March 2013
Using Pregnancy Discrimination Claims to Fight Poverty	Elizabeth Gedmark, <i>Clearinghouse Review</i>	January/February 2013
Cuomo's Sweeping Vision For New York	David Howard King, <i>Gotham Gazette</i>	January 2013
Pregnancy Discrimination: A Real-World Challenge	Bette Begleiter & JoAnne Fischer, <i>Philadelphia Enquirer</i>	January 2013