

(Substitute for S. B. 425)

(No. 59)

(Approved August 20, 2005)

AN ACT

To amend Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 of Act No. 51 of July 4, 2001, as amended, which created the Express Service Line, in order to extend its benefit to pregnant women.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Pregnancy is a special phase in the life of a woman. It is a time of physical changes in the body of the woman, in her emotions, and her professional and family life. Its consequence is an increase in stress, since these changes are accompanied by the common pregnancy discomforts and hormonal changes experienced by pregnant women.

Studies conducted suggest that the manner in which the body of a woman reacts to stress may have implications in her pregnancy. In order to contribute to reduce stress, among other things, it is necessary for pregnant women to be granted certain privileges that shall help them to maximize their quality of life during this period. Pregnancy is not a disability, yet it causes fatigue, swelling, nausea, dizziness, back pain, and other discomforts that at times prevent them from continuing with their life style before pregnancy. These discomforts, which are common during pregnancy, require that our society becomes an agent of assistance and support for pregnant women. The abovementioned discomforts usually appear when the woman remains standing. A woman may usually gain between 25 and 35 pounds during her pregnancy, that can affect her capacity to remain standing while she waits for a product or service.

This Legislature, in its commitment with women, deems it necessary to approve this Act, which intends to facilitate the daily chores of a pregnant women and allow prompt assistance to them in those places where day go to on a daily basis.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Section 1 of Act No. 51 of July 4, 2001, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 1.- Except as provided in the second paragraph of Section 3 of this Act, all agencies, instrumentalities, and public corporations, as well as the municipalities of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and private entities that receive public funds, that render direct services to the citizenry are hereby directed to design and adopt an “express service line” to benefit persons with disabilities, as certified by the Department of Health, as well as those persons sixty (60) years or older, duly identified by a card or any other proof of age issued by the Commonwealth or federal government authority and pregnant women, when they visit the same, on their own or accompanied by family members, or guardians or persons doing business on their behalf or as their representative, to discharge administrative matters and business exclusively on their behalf, and to pregnant women when carrying out daily chores personally.

Section 2.- The first paragraph of Section 2 of Act No. 51 of July, 4, 2001, is hereby amended, to read as follows:

“Section 2.- All agencies, instrumentalities, and public corporations of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as well as its municipalities and private entities that receive public funds, shall be responsible for posting in the area designated to take the turns and/or write their names in the waiting list, as well as in the main entrance of the facility, specifically in an area visible to

the public, at eye level, a sign, notice, poster, announcement or placard, visible and legible from a distance of ten (10) feet, stating the following:

“PRIORITY TURNS

For Persons with Disabilities, Persons of 60 years of age or more and/or Pregnant Women.

...”

Section 3.- Section 4 of Act No. 51 July 4, 2001, is hereby amended, to read as follows:

“Section 4.- When it is so requested, the Office of the Disabled Persons Investigating, Office of the Women’s Advocate, as well as the Office of Elderly Affairs shall provide the corresponding advice to the bodies responsible under this Act on the necessary regulations to be adopted for the making and affixing of said sign, notice, poster, announcement or placard so that the same is in compliance with the pertinent sections of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.”

Section 4.- Section 6 of Act No. 51 July 4, 2001, is hereby amended, to read as follows:

“Section 6.- The Office of the Disabled Persons Investigating Official, the Office of the Women’s Advocate, as well as the Office for the Affairs of the Elderly shall be in charge of ensuring compliance with this Act.”

Section 5.- A term of six (6) months after the approval of this Act is hereby granted to make the necessary amendments to any existing regulations, to amend existing signs or to create any forms needed to implement this Act.

Section 6.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 59 (Substitute for S.B. 425) of the 1st Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to amend Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 of Act No. 51 of July 4, 2001, as amended, which created the Express Service Line, in order to extend its benefit to pregnant women,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 1st of December of 2005.

Francisco J. Domenech
Director