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Support SB 44 - Public Buildings – Changing Facilities for Adult Diapers

What SB 44 does:

- Expands the requirement for installing a child changing table in public buildings to include changing facilities suitable for caring for older children or adults
- Requires the installation of a changing table suitable for changing children and adults in new public buildings or buildings undergoing renovations which cost \$30,000 or more
- Requires DGS to maintain a publicly available list of locations of the changing facilities required by this bill

Why is SB 44 needed?

- Adults with certain disabilities need caretakers to change incontinence products
- Lack of suitable changing facilities forces families to make choices like whether to change their loved ones on the floor of bathrooms, delay changing soiled incontinence products or staying home instead of going into the community
- Lack of suitable adult changing facilities results in individuals with disabilities and their families to be excluded from fully participating in their community
- Adult changing tables tend to be more usable for caretakers with disabilities when changing their children's diapers
- Adult changing tables reduce falling risk associated with moving an individual with a disability from a wheelchair to the floor

Other states with similar legislation:

CA and OH require public and privately owned buildings to include adult changing tables

AZ requires publicly owned buildings to include adult changing tables



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Adult changing tables are necessary for inclusion

Public spaces should have adult changing tables for people who have disabilities.

🕒 23 April 2019 Madison Karas 📁 Commentary, Opinion



EMMA STEVENS / THE TEMPLE NEWS



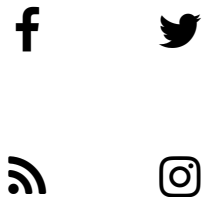
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When I worked as a personal care assistant for adults with physical disabilities, I went on a road trip with a family who'd



hired me to care for their 20-year-old son with cerebral palsy.

Before leaving in the morning, his mom and I changed his diaper and secured his wheelchair in their accessible van. While buckling him in, she joked that she hoped he wouldn't have to "go" anytime soon because we wouldn't be able to change him until we got to the hotel.



It was a three-and-a-half-hour drive, and we wouldn't be able to check into our hotel room until late that afternoon. The lack of fully accessible public restrooms equipped with adult changing tables left this mother no choice but risk making her child travel all day in a dirty diaper – stripping him of his right to sanitary conditions.

Adult changing tables – a rare amenity often only found in large hospitals – can support a few hundreds of pounds of weight, be adjusted for height and offer a necessity for adults with special needs.

By not offering adult changing tables in public restrooms, people with physical disabilities are limited in their access to public spaces. Communities need to start pushing for legislation to require businesses and public spaces to include adult changing tables to create fully accessible spaces for all members of society.

Those who have physical disabilities like cerebral palsy and seizure disorders that make them incontinent utilize these tables with the help of their parents or caregivers to take care of their toileting needs.

Buying and installing these tables can cost \$600-\$3,000, a Fox4 Kansas City reported in February. The tables are also often too large to fit in some bathrooms, which are main reasons but poor excuses for their uncommonness.



For businesses to fully serve a diverse customer base, these changing tables provide an essential service to accommodate a portion of their clientele. Without these tables in family restrooms in different venues, people often resort to leaving or lying their loved ones on a public restroom floor.

During our road trip, without any accessible restrooms en route, we had exactly two diaper-changing location options: in the back of the van in a parking lot or on the floor of a gas station bathroom. These options were both dehumanizing and unsanitary. And transitioning someone with cerebral palsy and spinal issues to a hard surface can injure them.

Moving someone with a disability out of their wheelchair is a hurdle that adult changing tables can accommodate. Parents and caregivers often have to single-handedly execute this transition. Lifting a 120-pound person to a level, height-adjusted changing table designed to sustain an adult-sized body is easier and safer than moving them to the floor.

During my time as a personal care assistant, I've seen parents and caregivers have to schedule meals for adults with special needs based around the availability of accessible bathrooms during public excursions.

Shawn Aleong, a freshman legal studies major and disability rights advocate who has cerebral palsy, said easing people's ability to go out will better our society.

"It should be included that we have adult changing tables...for those that need to them, so that they have an equal amount of access to the outside world as anyone else," Aleong said. "So that people with disabilities can go out to the mall, can go to the movies, can go to a concert and still have an accessible bathroom."

In 2010, the Americans with Disabilities Act was revised from its 1990 mandate to include grab bars, accessible faucet controls and larger toilet stalls, but failed to include any requirements for adult changing tables.



Celia Feinstein, the executive director of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, said public restroom accommodations are a key part of including people with disabilities in their communities.

“There should be a consideration that all of the things you would include in making a restroom accessible would be there,” Feinstein said. “We want to provide for accessible communities, and [adult changing tables are] just one way to increase accessibility for all.”

New York state Sen. Pamela Helming proposed \$1 million in a new state budget for full-service family restrooms with adult changing tables.

Helming made the proposal after a mother whose son has Pallister-Killian mosaic syndrome, a rare disorder that causes extremely weak muscle tone, reached out because she felt society’s push for inclusivity shouldn’t be limited to the able-bodied.

“Everyone needs accommodations, so why are we leaving out a specific group of people?” Aleong said. “We have to make sure everyone is included, even in the day-to-day actions of life.”

Supporting new legislation for this implementation should truly be a no-brainer. If large airports have accessible places for pets to toilet, then we should care enough to add adult changing tables in public spaces to accommodate the needs of all humans too.



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