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Women's Equality Coalition Calls for New York State Action to Protect Pregnant Workers after *Young v. UPS* Supreme Court Oral Arguments

(Albany, N.Y.) Yesterday, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the pregnancy discrimination case, *Young v. UPS*, and hundreds rallied outside the Supreme Court to stand with Peggy Young, the petitioner in the case. Young's story highlights critical issues women face on the job and underscores the urgent need for New York State legislators to put women's equality at the forefront of their legislative work.

Young was pushed onto unpaid leave from her job after she requested a doctor-advised reprieve from heavy lifting for the health of her pregnancy. UPS denied Young's request because of a company-wide policy, which stated that light duty would not be given to workers with certain medical conditions, such as pregnancy. However, the policy did provide light duty work to many other classes of employees, such as those who were injured on-the-job or those with disabilities.

Young was forced to make an impossible choice: protect her health or her paycheck. This is a choice no woman should have to make. Women deserve equal treatment and nothing less.

In light of the impending decision in the UPS case, the Women's Equality Coalition, comprised of over 850 businesses and organizations across New York State, renews its call to state lawmakers to address critical gaps in New York State's laws like the failure to protect pregnant women in the workplace. For nearly two years, the state legislature has failed to adopt legislation that breaks down barriers to equality including improving access to housing and orders of protection for victims of domestic violence; implementing measures to combat sex trafficking; tackling equal pay, sexual harassment and discrimination; making sure that pregnant women are able to stay healthy on-the-job; and securing women's access to reproductive healthcare.

"Women in New York face unfair treatment in the workplace and barriers to equality every day,"**said Corinne Carey, Assistant Legislative Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union.**"This needs to be the first thing state lawmakers take action on in 2015. And if there is a special session, then women's equality should be at the top of the agenda."

There has been great momentum in the last year with multiple states and localities, including West Virginia, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, passing stronger measures to ensure reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers who need them. A similar law in New York City went into effect earlier this year, but New York State lags behind, leaving those outside the five boroughs without explicit statutory protection.

"Unfortunately, Peggy Young's story is not an isolated instance – and no woman should have to suffer the financial hardship she endured simply to maintain a healthy pregnancy. We see this problem all the time in our free legal clinic for New Yorkers—pregnant women are pushed out of their jobs when they just need a modest accommodation to stay healthy and employed," **said Dina Bakst, Co-Founder & Co-President of A Better Balance**. "We are calling for immediate state legislative action in New York because we see firsthand the economic consequences that occur when women are pushed out of their jobs right when they need income the most to support their families."

Learn more at: nywomensequality.org
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The NYWEC Steering Committee is comprised of the following organizations:
A Better Balance; AAUW-NYS; Family Planning Advocates of NYS; League of Women Voters NYS; National Organization for Women – NYC; New York Civil Liberties Union, NYS AFL-CIO; NYS Anti-Trafficking Coalition; NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Equal Pay Coalition NYC; New York Paid Family Leave Coalition; Planned Parenthood Advocates of NY; Sanctuary for Families; YWCAs of New York State

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