

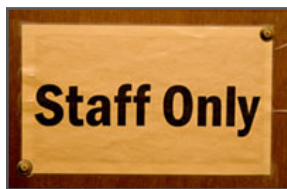


Poop Bill to Relieve Suffering

By Charisse Dengler

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For sufferers of Crohn's disease in the state of Minnesota, relief is on the way in the form of the "Poop Bill," a bill approved by the Senate that would require businesses to allow people with medical conditions such as Crohn's disease to use employee restrooms. The bill was proposed by Senator Yvonne Prettner Solon, and individuals living with Crohn's are desperately hoping it becomes law.



Crohn's disease, defined by The Mayo Clinic as "an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that causes chronic inflammation of the intestinal tract," affects more than 27,000 people in the state of Minnesota and approximately

500,000 people nationwide.

"Like ulcerative colitis, another common IBD, Crohn's disease can be both painful and debilitating and sometimes may lead to life-threatening complications," The Mayo Clinic's website states.

According to the *Star Tribune*, states began passing legislation similar to the "Poop Bill" after an incident in Illinois when Ally Bain, a teenager with Crohn's disease, had an accident in an Old Navy store. She spoke up about it, and soon after, the state passed "Ally's Law" which gives people like Bain the right to use employee restrooms inside places of business—

bathrooms that are otherwise not open to the public. So far, Maryland has also passed a law like this one, and this type of law is being considered in Michigan and Texas.

The Minnesota law would require employees to let individuals with medical conditions use their restrooms, but only if there were enough people working so that there was no security issue posed by the inconvenience. In addition, the individual would have to show proof of a medical condition with either an ID card or a letter from his or her doctor. Each time a business failed to comply, it would receive a warning letter leading up to misdemeanor charges that carry a fine.

While the proposal's companion bill did not get action in the House this year, some are optimistic that it will next year, and some, like James Fennell, Executive Director of the Minnesota/Dakotas chapter of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America, are just glad the issue is being confronted and brought to the public's attention.

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