

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 34.

As a breastfeeding mother of five children, I strongly support House Bill 34; giving breastfeeding mothers of babies, age one year and younger, the option to be excused from jury duty.

Breastfeeding is an important element in forming a strong and vital mother-child relationship. Breastfeeding creates a bonding experience between mother and child because, among other components, it promotes skin-to-skin contact. Deep and lasting benefits of breastfeeding extend to both the mother and infant. There are numerous psychological, emotional, and mental health benefits to breastfeeding. Consistency and timing are vital in breastfeeding. If a mother is forced to wait too long to nurse or pump, it can reduce milk supply. The more delayed nursing or pumping, the less milk the body will make. If a mom does not pump as often as her baby would eat, the body believes that less milk is needed, and therefore the body will make *less* milk for the infant.

Currently when a mother is called for jury duty, breastfeeding is not a valid reason to excuse her from jury duty; even when those duties interfere with her ability to provide for the needs of her child. From personal experience, shortly after becoming a new mother, my name was selected for jury duty. As a breastfeeding mother of a young infant, I was unsure how to fulfill my civic duty while providing for my daughter. When I inquired about my options, I was not excused from jury duty and was not permitted to bring my child with me. I was told that if I chose to bring my daughter, she (the infant) would have to remain in the hallway, outside the courtroom doors.

If I had been given the option to be excused from jury duty during this situation, it would have greatly eased the stress of trying to comply with jury duty while taking care of my child. As we strive to build strong families and strong communities, I strongly request your support of House Bill 34.

Thank you for your time and I respectfully ask for your support of this legislation.

Joy E. Manz

P.S. I did **not** leave my baby in the court house hallway.