



# Center FOR Christian Virtue

*Public Policy. Engagement. Education.*

To: Chair Brett Hudson Hillyer  
Vice Chair Adam Mathews  
Ranking Member Tavia Galonski  
House Civil Justice Committee

From: Nilani Jawahar  
Legislative Liaison  
Center for Christian Virtue

Re: Support for HB 34

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee,

My name is Nilani Jawahar and I am here on behalf of Center for Christian Virtue, Ohio's largest Christian public policy organization, to testify in support of House Bill 34, which would excuse nursing mothers from the civic obligation to serve on a jury.

The right to a trial by jury is a basic freedom protected by our constitution, and therefore to sit on a jury is an important public service to the community. Judges should have some freedom to discern whether a prospective juror has a legitimate excuse to be exempt from this service—but there are some cases where that decision should not be left to a judge; which is why certain exemptions are codified in Ohio law such as for those who are grieving the death of a close relative or for those who have a small child at home for whom they cannot find a caretaker. One would hope that a judge would by his own conviction be compelled to offer exemptions to these people, but if he is not, the law must protect their ability to attend to their other obligations, especially given that there is no shortage of prospective jurors.

Jury duty can be a time-consuming engagement and juror contact is often limited. For a breastfeeding mother, any interruption to her schedule can pose a challenge to the health and development of her child. There is a bond that forms between the mother and child during the nursing period which should not be interrupted. To be summoned for jury duty and not excused to attend to the needs of her baby, the mother is being forced to prioritize service to the public over service to her family—something which, in my opinion, no judge has a right to tell a woman she must do.

As a state, our laws should reflect our values. Ohio should take a stand to protect nursing mothers and their babies, and this is one simple way that we can do that.

For these reasons, CCV urges the committee to vote 'yes' on House Bill 34. Thank you for allowing me to testify. I am happy to take any questions.



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*The Center for Christian Virtue (CCV) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that endeavors to create an Ohio where God's blessings of life, family, and religious freedom are treasured, respected, and protected.*

*[www.ccv.org](http://www.ccv.org) -- (513) 733-5775*