

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 34.

There is no bond greater than a mother and her nursing child. It is a symbiotic relationship. The child depends on its mother for nourishment and the mother depends on the child to be able to provide the nourishment.

If a mother nurses her child for 12 months, or longer, it reduces the mother's chances of breast cancer and ovarian cancer by 28%. The risk of Type 2 Diabetes for the mother decreases by 4-12%, for each year she nurses her child. Cardiovascular disease risk goes down 10% when the mother nurses for a year.

Babies who are nursed are 36% less likely to succumb to SIDs. Breastfeeding reduces gastrointestinal infections for the infant by 64%. Middle ear inflammation is reduced by 50% if the infant is breastfed for 3 months or longer. Childhood and adult obesity is reduced by 15-30% if the infant is breastfed.

As a nursing mother who has successfully nursed both of my children 12+ months, these statistics blow me away. It proves how beneficial it is for both the mother and the child. When I'm nursing my baby, the last place I want to be is assigned to a jury duty where I have to be separated from my infant, with the possibility of not enough pumping breaks. This would increase my chances of obtaining mastitis, losing my supply and not being able to feed my child - especially with the ongoing formula issues - and losing that precious bond before me or my child were ready to.

Many of the members on this committee would consider themselves proponents for families. Passing House Bill 34 is pro-family, and it gives support to mothers in a time where support is sometimes most lacking.

Thank you for your time and support.

Erica Schmackers