

# Family and Home Network™

Publisher of Welcome Home®

9493-C Silver King Court • Fairfax, Virginia 22031  
Phone 703-352-1072 • Fax 703-352-1076  
[www.FamilyAndHome.org](http://www.FamilyAndHome.org)

February 15, 2005

Rep. Susan Westrom  
Capitol Annex, Room 451A  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Rep. Robert Damron  
Capitol Annex, Room 307A  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Representatives Westrom and Damron,

Thank you for co-sponsoring Kentucky House Bill 228, The Family Friendly Jury Duty Act. As a national nonprofit organization advocating for families who provide nurturing care for their children, Family and Home Network strongly supports this legislation. This bill recognizes the critical importance of the caregiver/child bond and offers the caregivers of young children, as well as those who care for an elderly or disabled relative, the option of being excused from jury service.

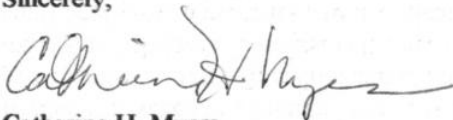
We're pleased to see the Kentucky legislature taking this important step to support the needs of children. In recent years, there has been more research-based evidence about the critical importance of nurturing. In their book "The Irreducible Needs of Children" (Perseus Books, October 2000) two of our nation's most renowned doctors — pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton and child psychiatrist Stanley I. Greenspan — identify the most basic needs of infants and children. The first is the need for "ongoing nurturing relationships." The doctors emphasize that emotional growth precedes and is critical for intellectual and moral growth. "There are no shortcuts," they state. "This basic feature of caring relationships between a baby and a caregiver who really knows her over the long haul is responsible for a surprisingly large number of vital mental capacities."

For more than twenty years, we've heard from parents across the U.S. who are dismayed by a jury system that does not acknowledge the nurturing parent/child bond. Parents know the harm that can be inflicted on a securely attached baby or young child by disrupting that bond and they want to defer their jury duty service until their children are older. We've listened to parents express their respect for the jury system and acknowledge their responsibilities as citizens and their willingness to serve as jurors when their children are older. Without a law that grants parents the right to defer jury duty, each parent who receives a call to jury duty is subject to a judge's (or court clerk's) arbitrary decision regarding their application to be excused from serving.

Family and Home Network has thousands of members across the U.S., and jury duty legislation in the states is one of the issues about which we provide updates on our website, [www.FamilyAndHome.org](http://www.FamilyAndHome.org). We recognize the vital role of state legislators in addressing the needs of families, and appreciate your attention to this issue.

Thank you for supporting families and recognizing the needs of children.

Sincerely,



Catherine H. Myers  
Executive Director  
[cmyers@FamilyAndHome.org](mailto:cmyers@FamilyAndHome.org)

cc: Kathy Schattner, 2378 Harrods Pointe Trace, Lexington, KY 40514