

HB 256 – Written Testimony for House Judiciary Committee Hearing
Paula Goodnight
June 2, 2005

My story is not overly dramatic, but it was horribly inconvenient to be called for jury duty with a baby, a toddler, and another little girl at home. I was a stay-at-home breastfeeding mother at the time.

When asked by the judge whether or not I had any reason I could not serve as a juror, I explained that I was nursing a baby. I explained about the need to pump my breasts at various intervals throughout the day. The judge was very understanding and kind and assured me that there would be ample time to pump my breasts when the jurors had breaks. He was also nice enough to tell me if I served for this specific trial, he would then excuse me for the rest of my term, so I readily agreed and was, indeed, chosen to serve.

I was very lucky in that the judge was very nice to me about my situation. However, as the day progressed, I realized this judge did not have a clear understanding about breastfeeding or pumping. For one thing, it was rather awkward to try to explain to a man (the judge) about pumping in the first place, in front of the whole courtroom. Secondly, when the jurors were excused for our first break, all of us were excused to the jury room where there was one bathroom: one bathroom for all of us, with a 10-to-15- minute break. There was no time to pump.

Lunchtime came, and I was so relieved! But, again, a problem arose: my breasts were so engorged and painful by around noon, but my milk would not "let down" and I had a hard time getting the pump to suction properly. There was no time for me to go home (to another town in our county) to use hot compresses which had always helped with engorgement before. By the time I was able to successfully pump--in my car no less--, there was certainly no time for me to eat lunch! And, I must add, it was frustrating to go through the pain of pumping when engorged and then to be so hungry on top of everything else!

In the afternoon, again, the 10-minute break was not sufficient time for me to pump and for all the jurors to use the restroom. Additionally, if I had pumped my breasts in that small restroom connected to the jury room, everyone, men included, would have heard the rhythmic hum of the pump's motor: not a tragedy, but something I preferred not having to do or explain. Instead I wore 3 nursing pads on each breast, to prevent my milk from leaking all over my clothes while I sat in the courtroom.

By the time I got home the first evening, I was again very painfully engorged. I had to use hot compresses and then deal with a frantic baby trying to latch on to an engorged breast, which is exceedingly hard for the infant and especially painful to the mother! Engorgement is not only painful but can lead to blocked milk ducts, fever, and infection.

Day Two was a repeat of the same. Luckily the trial was only two days, and, as promised, the judge excused me for the rest of my term.

My concern is that although the judge tried to be understanding to the best of his knowledge, he simply did not understand the needs of a nursing mother. I wrongly assumed he did when he said of course I would have breaks to pump my breasts. I do not fault him for not being aware of a nursing mother's needs, especially when he tried to be helpful, but why put any nursing mother through that?

Lastly, my husband had to take two days of his vacation from work to stay home with my children while I served on the jury. There's no way the juror's compensation would have covered child

care for two days for three children of diverse ages. Thus, my husband ended up minus two days of precious vacation that should have been used specifically as he wished as vacation time is intentioned, instead of using vacation because I was called away for jury duty.

Please support HB 256, the Family Friendly Jury Duty Bill, not only for nursing mothers, but for all stay-at-home mothers and caregivers, homeschooling parents, and caregivers of disabled or the elderly.

Thank you for your support,
Paula Goodnight
Maineville, OH