



Judicial Impact Statement

www.ohiojudges.org

June 2017

Marta Mudri, Esq., Legislative Counsel

HB 13: Exemption from Jury Service for Breast-Feeding Mothers

Title Information

To amend section 2313.14 of the Revised Code to permit a prospective juror who is a mother who is breast-feeding her baby to be excused from jury service.

Background

Current law allows courts to exempt people from jury duty for hardship or to defer jury duty in six month increments.

Judicial Impact

Courts across Ohio are happy to make accommodations for nursing mothers or to exempt them if necessary, with or without an affidavit. Additionally, all potential jurors in Ohio have the ability to defer jury service for several months, if necessary, and return to the court to perform this civic duty at a more convenient time (Sec. 2313.15).

Jury service is an important component of our American justice system and all citizens have an obligation to honor it. To the parties involved, a case can be life-changing, and the parties deserve to have it decided by honest and impartial jurors. There is no reason to excuse nursing mothers from jury duty if they instead may be able to serve with accommodation from the court or to simply defer and return to serve at a later date.

The Ohio judiciary is mindful that jury service can constitute an undue personal or financial hardship for some prospective jurors. However, Ohio judges should have the discretion to review these hardships on a case by case basis. Ohio's eighty-eight counties are remarkably diverse. Whether it is a farmer during harvesting season, a university student during exam week, or a pregnant mother-to-be, Ohio judges should have the flexibility to address the needs of prospective jurors while insuring a broad cross section of that county's population remains in the jury pool. The judge is in the best position to balance the individual needs of each potential juror against the immediate requirements of a particular case.

Conclusion

The Ohio Judicial Conference resists any effort to exempt from jury service broad classes of Ohio citizens and supports any efforts to include all citizens in the pool of prospective jurors regardless of race, national origin, gender, age, religions belief, income, occupation, or disability.

What is a Judicial Impact Statement?

A Judicial Impact Statement describes as objectively and accurately as possible the probable, practical effects on Ohio's court system of the adoption of the particular bill. The court system includes people who use the courts (parties to suits, witnesses, attorneys and other deputies, probation officials, judges and others). The Ohio Judicial Conference prepares these statements pursuant to R.C. 105.911.