

**TESTIMONY TO THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN IN FAVOR OF SB 194 (Raised) An Act Concerning the Postponement of Jury Duty for Breastfeeding Mothers**

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As a Neonatologist at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, I have cared for many newborns and their mothers over the past 23 years in CT. As the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states in its most recent Policy Statement on Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk (Pediatrics February 27, 2012), "The AAP reaffirms its recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for about 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding as complementary foods are introduced, with continuation of breastfeeding for 1 year or longer as mutually desired by mother and infant." With an average of 75% of mothers initiating breastfeeding in the hospital, we know mothers and families understand the importance of human milk to their babies and to themselves. As also stated in the AAP Policy Statement, breastfeeding and the support of breastfeeding is more than a lifestyle choice—it is a public health issue and needs to be recognized as such.

This brings us to the issue of jury duty for breastfeeding mothers. In 2000, we successfully introduced, and the legislature voted into law, Public Act No. 01-182 AN ACT CONCERNING BREASTFEEDING IN THE WORKPLACE. This law protects a mother's right to express her milk or nurse her baby in the workplace. This is necessary because while she is away from the baby at work, 1) the baby need to eat and 2) if the mother does not empty her breast, she will become engorged which is painful, will affect her ability to work, will lead to decreased milk for her baby as breastfeeding works on supply and demand; and may lead to serious medical complications such as plugged ducts and mastitis.

The issue with jury duty is that although breastfeeding mothers can be issued an exemption, at best it is for the first 10 months of a baby's life. A mother following her pediatrician's advice to breastfeed for at least one year is still breastfeeding at that time. If called for jury duty, she will be separated from her baby for a minimum of one day if not called for a case, for up to many days, weeks or months depending on the case she is chosen for. This is not supportive of the public health mandate to support her to breastfeed. Not to mention that in this unsupported state, she will not be giving her full attention to the case at hand, and will likely find serving on a jury as extremely difficult, and possibly not be able to do the best job possible. No accommodation is made for her to bring the baby with her, or for her to have a place and the time (2-3 times during an 8 hour work day) to express her milk in a safe, private clean environment that is not a bathroom (as our workplace law states). It is therefore impossible for her to provide for her baby and serve on a jury simultaneously.

SB 194 (Raised) An Act Concerning the Postponement of Jury Duty for Breastfeeding Mothers would exempt breastfeeding mothers from jury duty for the first 12 months of her baby's life, in keeping with AAP recommendations.

Therefore, I ask the Committee on Children to please act favorably in passing this bill forward. SB 194 has the full support of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.