



**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**

March 1, 2012

Michele Griswold, MPH, RN, IBCLC

Chair

Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Urban and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to present the following testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition in favor of AN ACT CONCERNING THE POSTPONEMENT OF JURY DUTY FOR BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS. In Connecticut, mothers have the legal right to breastfeed wherever they are allowed to be except apparently in the courtroom. The obligation of jury duty has been identified as a barrier for nursing mothers in Connecticut. Although postponement is possible, the maximum amount of time to postpone, falls short of the minimum recommendations for breastfeeding. The issue is that breastfeeding mothers have a unique physiologic need to either nurse or to express milk at frequent intervals during the day in order to continue to make enough milk for their children. Even if a breastfeeding mother is able to successfully navigate the day or so of the selection process, she may be chosen to serve. Some cases last days, weeks or even months. Connecticut courts do not consistently accommodate breastfeeding mothers by providing safe, clean, reliable places to express milk, nor do they allow children in court. A forced separation of the breastfeeding mother and child predisposes the mother to infection, compromised ability to produce milk, early breastfeeding discontinuation and ultimately increased health risks for her child and herself.

Just three days ago, The American Academy of Pediatrics, issued an updated policy on Breastfeeding in which they state "Breastfeeding should not be considered a lifestyle choice, but rather as a basic health issue." To that end, the AAP recommends about 6 months exclusive breastfeeding and continuation for up to one year for children. Only 2 in 10 Connecticut children receive the minimum amount of breastfeeding and as such are at increased risk for obesity, asthma, diabetes, allergies and SIDS among other conditions. Stopping breastfeeding

before the recommended time, puts their mothers at risk for breast and ovarian cancer and possibly post partum depression.

Despite the myriad of barriers, most Connecticut mothers are choosing to breastfeed. In 2009, of the almost 40,000 infants born in the state, 30,000 of their mothers chose to initiate breastfeeding based on the promise for optimal opportunities for health. Unfortunately, most stop before the recommended time contributing to breastfeeding rates in Connecticut that underachieve the national objectives. The fact is that the health of Connecticut's mothers and children is threatened by the lack of opportunity for successful breastfeeding due in part to societal barriers. Breastfeeding mothers should be able to maintain their right to participate in the judicial process and breastfeed their children for at the least the minimum recommended duration.

We ask that you support AN ACT CONCERNING THE POSTPONEMENT OF JURY DUTY FOR BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS for up to one year in order to remove just one of the barriers that breastfeeding mothers face. I am sure that we can all agree that Connecticut's children deserve the best start in life. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Griswold, MPH, RN, IBCLC

Chair

Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition

www.breastfeedingct.org

mgriswold@breastfeedingct.org

860.510.2599