

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
House Bill 1440
Courts- Parental Accommodations
February 27, 2025

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

My name is Megan Jones. I am a mother, a resident of Baltimore City, and a Managing Attorney at a non-profit. I am here today in my personal capacity to support HB 1440 with amendments.

As a lawyer, I understand the importance of jury trials and the need to provide defendants with a jury of their peers. As a working mother, I am grateful for the women who fought to ensure I have a right to pump and breastfeed in public places. But, as someone who tried to prioritize jury service over personal comfort and convenience, I can tell you there should absolutely be an exemption for breastfeeding parents, including, for now, parents who are able to express breastmilk.

I was originally scheduled for jury duty a few weeks after my due date and when I called, I was granted an extension to January 2023. My daughter was 4 months old at the time. She was exclusively fed breast milk and was nursing every 3 hours.

Although I had gone back to work at this point, I was primarily working from home where we hosted a nanny share and I could nurse my daughter “on demand” when she needed me. Luckily, though, my daughter had learned to drink milk from a bottle in addition to nursing and when I did have to go into work, I had my own private mini fridge in my personal office for storing milk and access to a kitchenette with a large sink stocked with dish soap and hot water available for when I needed to wash parts between use.

In order to attend jury duty, I packed up a cooler with every ice pack we had and ziploc bags to store my pump parts in between use, since there was nowhere to safely wash my pump parts at the courthouse. With my daughter feeding every three hours at that point, I was expecting to need to pump 2-3 times while at jury duty (at approximately 9am, noon, and 3pm), so my plan was to seal the pump parts in a ziploc bag in my cooler and reuse them for the 2nd and 3rd pumps.

Thankfully, my daughter was a healthy full-term infant because the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and most breast pump manufacturers recommend cleaning pump parts thoroughly after every use.¹ The CDC acknowledges that some parents may face instances where it is not possible to wash a

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https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/about/about-breast-pump-hygiene.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/childcare/breast-pump.html; <https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/pdf/breastpumpkit-clean-508.pdf>; <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/breast-pumps/cleaning-breast-pump>.

pump part before re-using it. In these cases, the CDC states that rinsing and then refrigerating pump parts for a few hours between uses will help slow the growth of bacteria. Since this does not stop bacteria from growing, the CDC expressly states that it is not clear whether this is a safe alternative to washing between use every time and notes that infants have become ill from bacteria growing on improperly cleaned pump parts. Parents with infants younger than 2 months, born prematurely, or with a compromised immune system are strongly cautioned against this practice. But there is no safe sink for rinsing, let alone washing pump parts, available at the Baltimore City courthouse, so moms must choose to bring extra pump parts (if they have them) or reuse.

A further problem arose when I needed to charge my pump after one of my pumping sessions. I made sure to get a seat by a charger wall when I went back to the juror waiting room but I got called for a jury panel, gathered my cooler, and trekked over to the other courthouse, and in the rush of movement, didn't grab my charging pump. I was dismissed straight from the courtroom when our trial settled and I went home to nurse my daughter, so I didn't realize until she was in bed for the night that my pump was missing.

I returned to the courthouse the following Monday to check lost and found and the sheriff's office downstairs with no luck and ended up needing to replace my pump. While I am of course to blame for accidentally leaving it unattended, the fact remains that even with a private place to pump, the courthouse is neither equipped to support parents in safely expressing breastmilk for their infants while waiting for jury duty nor in storing and managing all their pumping accessories while on jury duty.

As new Courthouses are built, HB 1440 will require them to provide facilities that allow for *safe* expression of breastmilk, but the current courthouses lack sinks for washing pump parts and therefore do not provide facilities that allow parents to express breastmilk in a manner consistent with CDC guidelines.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 1440 with amendment. The bill could benefit from language to explicitly include parents expressing breastmilk for their infants as "breastfeeding" parent, but with the addition of that language, the bill will allow breastfeeding parents to serve jury duty if they feel prepared to do so, but will allow those who need to ensure their infants have safely expressed and maintained milk, those with exclusively breastfed babies, and those without adequate childcare to be exempt from service.