

Testimony for House Bill 1440  
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I am writing in support of House Bill 1440. I have been a Baltimore City resident since 2011 and a mother since 2021. I have served on a 7-day trial and appeared for summons many times in my 14 years in Baltimore. I still get paid by my job when I have jury duty so I have never had a problem with doing my civic duty until my most recent summons, in January 2024, when my second child was 6 months and 8 days old (had he been under 6 months, I would have been excused). Having served on a trial previously, I did not see how a trial could possibly accommodate my need to pump three times throughout the day so it seemed like a waste of everyone's time to have me appear, but I showed up nonetheless.

Below is my account of my jury duty experience. Overall, the jury duty staff and court personnel were uneducated about both lactation and the lactation facilities, the rooms were inadequate, and trials are not set up to accommodate lactating parents' typical need to leave every 2-3 hours for 30 minutes.

Once I received my summons, I sought advice from parents on my neighborhood parents' facebook group. Luckily, I was already used to pumping but I was pretty dismayed to hear of people's very negative experiences using the lactation rooms. I learned that there was no sink or water in the lactation room. I was very fortunate for that advice because I was prepared with my own water and sanitizing wipes so that I would not contaminate my breastmilk or pump parts. I ended up needing to share them with another parent who didn't have forewarning about this.

When I checked in the morning of jury duty, I asked how the lactation room worked and the person told me I would need to check back in with the desk and someone would walk me down to the room. I asked what would happen if I needed to pump while in a courtroom, and she said "well you can pump now." I explained that I didn't need to pump now, I needed to pump later because I pumped at the times that my baby ate. She said that I should talk to the court clerk, who might have me do it at a certain time based on the trial's schedule. I told her I had to stick to my baby's eating schedule, and she just said "you'll need to talk to the clerk."

I was still waiting for my number to be called when I first needed to pump and was escorted to the room. There was a sign saying to disinfect your pumping area using the provided wipes but the canister was empty. The CDC recommends washing your hands before you pump and washing your pump parts after each session; given the set-up and needing to be escorted to and from the room, this was not feasible. There are only two chairs in the room so I don't know what I would have done if it was full. There was another parent in the room during two of my

three pumping sessions. The water cooler was empty, but the new bottle was sitting on the floor waiting to be put in.

When I returned from pumping, my number had been called, and the staff directed me to go to the courtroom. They hadn't gotten very far so being late wasn't really an issue but I did still interrupt the proceedings when I entered. None of the questions during voir dire really address needing to pump (one asked if there was a medical reason that made it impossible to serve, and I would not say it's impossible so I didn't say yes to that), but I had answered yes to another question so when I was called up about that, I told the judge that I would need to pump every three hours and she said "thank you for telling me." I told her I would need to pump next at 12:30, she said okay, and that was that. I was not selected for that trial.

Then I sat in the waiting room, pumped again, and waited more. At 3:15, my number was called again but we had to go to a different building. I needed to pump around 3:45 and I had seen signs that I had to remove my breast milk from the fridge by 4:30 so I figured I would just tell them when I got there that I needed to pump, and they would send me back. When I arrived, I approached the clerk and he told me to sit down. I told him I needed to use the lactation room in 15 minutes, and he seemed annoyed and said I would have to talk to the judge. So then I told the judge and lawyers that I needed to pump in 15 minutes. The judge told me that we needed to do the first part of voir dire, which would take 20-25 minutes, and then I could go and asked if that was okay. I said that I needed to stick to my schedule so that my baby would have enough to eat tonight, and he said that everyone else would have to wait for me to get back if I went before we did the first part of voir dire, and since there were like 200 people in the room, I felt pressured to agree. It ended up taking about 30 minutes, and then he called me back up and said "This trial may take several days. Is there any reason you can't serve? Just yes or no." I said "I need to pump every 3 hours. Other than that, no." He said I could go pump and that I had to come back when I was done. I explained it would take about 30 minutes because I had to go back to the other building because my breast milk was there. His clerk also mentioned that he didn't know where the lactation room was in this building, despite it being two doors down from the courtroom we were in. The judge told me they would still be there when I got back

I walked back to the main building, had to check-in with the front desk again, then go across the hall to get an escort, and that employee also did not know where the lactation room was. I told her I could show her. I pumped again and returned to the other building. They were still doing voir dire. We weren't dismissed until after 5, and I wasn't excused from the trial when others were, so presumably the judge thought he could appropriately accommodate my schedule because we were instructed to return the next day.

The next day was uneventful because we just sat around in the hallway for more than an hour until the judge told us he didn't actually need us so I was able to pump without issue, but the water cooler in that room was also empty. I pointed it out to the person escorting me to the room, and she said "I told him last week to replace that!"

Both lactation rooms had posters extolling the benefits of breastfeeding, which was frustrating given the lack of support the jury duty system actually provided for it.