

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2472

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 18, 2023

The Senate Judiciary Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2472.

This bill exempts nursing mothers from jury duty when the child is one year of age or younger. Under current law, nursing mothers are not explicitly exempted from jury duty, which can present a hardship to mothers who are nursing or expressing milk for their babies.

Currently, statutory exemptions from jury duty include those for persons: 75 years of age or older; who have served on a jury within the previous three years; or who will suffer severe hardship due to circumstances that are unlikely to change within a year (e.g. medical conditions or severe financial hardship compromising the ability to support oneself or one's dependents). Also exempted are members of volunteer fire departments, first aid squads, and rescue squads and, under certain circumstances during a school term, elementary and secondary school teachers.

Medical professionals state that breastfeeding provides health benefits to infants. Breastfeeding has been associated with reduced risk of respiratory infections, gastrointestinal tract infections, sudden infant death syndrome, allergic disease, celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease, obesity, diabetes, childhood leukemia and lymphoma, and neurodevelopmental disorders. Breastfeeding has also been associated with health benefits to mothers such as reduced risk of rheumatoid arthritis, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

This bill would support mothers who are nursing or expressing milk by enabling them to claim an exemption from jury duty during the first year of their child's life.