

United States District Court
Southern District of Illinois
750 Missouri Avenue
East St. Louis, Illinois 62201

Chambers of
MICHAEL J. REAGAN
CHIEF U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE

Dear Prospective Juror:

As Chief Judge for the Southern District of Illinois, I would like to welcome you to federal jury service. Trial by jury is a long standing institution, extending for at least 800 years back to the signing of the Magna Carta. With the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the Founders of this Nation made clear the continued importance of jury service, by granting the right to a trial by jury in both criminal and civil cases. Jury service, like voting, is one of the greatest rights and highest responsibilities citizens have in our democracy.

Prospective jurors often have many questions when they learn they have been summoned for jury service. Many of these can be answered by the enclosed pamphlet. Perhaps the most common question is who qualifies and who is exempt from jury service. Individuals are qualified for jury service in the Southern District of Illinois, so long as they:

- Are a United States Citizen, over the age of 18, having resided within the District for at least one year;
- Can read, write, and understand the English language sufficient to complete the jury qualification form;
- Can speak English;
- Are capable, physically and mentally, to render jury service;
- Have never been convicted of a felony in state or federal court, or currently have a charge pending against them; and

- Are registered voters or have an Illinois driver's license.

Under the Jury Selection and Service Act of 1968, three groups are expressly exempted from jury service:

- Members in active service in the military;
- Members of police or fire departments (not including volunteer, commercial departments or correctional institutions); and
- Public officers in the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of any jurisdiction who are actively engaged in the performance of official duties.

Under the local Random Selection of Jurors Plan, the following *may* be excused upon individual request and if any service would cause undue hardship or extreme inconvenience.

- Persons over 70 years of age;
- Persons who have, within the previous two years, served on a federal petit or grand jury;
- Persons having active care and custody of a child or children under ten years of age whose health or safety would be jeopardized by their absence for jury service, and person who are essential to the care of aged or infirm persons;
- Any person whose services are so essential to the operation of a business, commercial, or agricultural enterprise that the business must close or cease to function if the person were required to perform jury service;
- Persons serving as volunteer safety personnel, who serve without compensation for a public agency, such as volunteer police, firefighters, rescue squads, or ambulance crew;

Other individuals *may* be excused on a case-by-case basis. However, because of the importance of jury service, the standard for receiving an excuse is incredibly high. Before you can be excused, you must demonstrate *undue or extreme* inconvenience. (see 28 USC § 1866) All requests for excuses must be made in writing and will be verified by the Court.

Your employer may continue your salary during all or part of your jury service, but federal law does not require an employer to do so. Nonetheless, the Jury Act forbids any employer from firing, intimidating, or coercing any employee because of their federal jury service. You should check whether your company or employer has a policy for employees serving on jury duty.

More information regarding jury service in the Southern District of Illinois may be found by clicking on the tab "Jury Information" at www.ilsd.uscourts.gov.

Your service as jurors helps ensure that law and order is maintained and that justice is upheld for your fellow citizens. I again thank you for your service to our Court.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael J. Reagan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Michael J. Reagan
Chief Judge
United States District Court
Southern District of Illinois