



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

STACI M. YANDLE
Chief District Judge

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Dear Prospective Juror:

As Chief Judge for the Southern District of Illinois, I welcome you to federal jury service. Trial by jury is a long-standing institution in our country, extending back to the signing of the Magna Carta. With the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the founders of our nation stressed the continued importance of jury service by granting the right to 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 receive a juror summons. Perhaps the most common question is who qualifies-and who is exempt-from jury service. In a nutshell, an individual is qualified for jury service in this federal district court, so long as he or she:

- Is a United States Citizen, over the age of 18, who has resided within the Southern District of Illinois for at least one year;
- Can read, write, and understand the English language sufficient to complete the jury qualification form;
- Can speak English;
- Is capable, physically and mentally, to render jury service;
- Has never been convicted of a felony in state or federal court, or currently has a felony charge pending; and
- Is a registered voter or has 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 military service;
- 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 our local jury plan, the following individuals may be excused upon request, if service would cause undue hardship or extreme inconvenience.

- A person over 70 years of age;
- A person who has, within the previous two years, served on a federal petit or grand jury;
- A person who has active care and custody of a child or children under ten years of age whose health or safety would be jeopardized by his or her absence for jury service, and a person who is 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 that person were required to perform jury service;
- A person serving as volunteer safety personnel, who serves 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. Because of the importance of jury service, however, the standard for receiving an excuse is *incredibly high*. Before you can be excused, you must demonstrate undue or extreme inconvenience. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1866) All requests for an excuse 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 his or her federal jury service. You should check whether your company or employer has a jury service policy.

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 a juror helps ensure that law and order is maintained, and that justice is upheld for your fellow citizens. I thank you in advance for your service to the Southern District of Illinois.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Staci M. Yandle". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Staci M. Yandle
Chief Judge