

SCS SB 87 -- BREAST-FEEDING

SPONSOR: Schaaf (Bahr)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities by a vote of 10 to 0.

This substitute specifies that the act of a mother breast-feeding a child or expressing breast milk in a public or private location where the mother and child are otherwise authorized to be must not constitute sexual conduct or sexual contact as defined under criminal law or be considered an act of public indecency, indecent exposure, sexual conduct, lewd touching, or obscenity or any other similar term for purposes of state or municipal law.

A municipality cannot enact an ordinance prohibiting or restricting a mother from breast-feeding a child or expressing breast milk in a public or private location where the mother and child are otherwise authorized to be.

The substitute adds a nursing mother to the list of persons who must be excused from jury service. Any nursing mother, upon her request, and with a completed written statement from her physician to the court certifying that she is a nursing mother must be excused from service as a petit or grand juror.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill is intended to remove any roadblocks to breastfeeding. There are immense benefits to breastfeeding and women need more support from their community to feel more comfortable breastfeeding in public places. Embarrassment is the primary barrier to women who are trying to breast feed.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Schaaf; Rebecca Schwaller, Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition; and Kathy Mertzluft.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.