

SENATE BILL NO. 405

INTRODUCED BY J. TREBAS, D. ZOLNIKOV

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO JURORS; PROVIDING THAT A PERSON OVER 75 YEARS OF AGE MUST BE EXCUSED FROM JURY DUTY; AND AMENDING SECTION 3-15-313, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 3-15-313, MCA, is amended to read:

**"3-15-313. Who may be excused -- affidavit to claim excuse -- permanent exclusion for chronically incapacitated.** (1) The court or the jury commissioner with the approval of the court shall excuse a person from jury service upon finding that jury service would entail undue hardship for the person, a dependent of the person, or the public served by the person. An excuse may be granted if the prospective juror is a breastfeeding mother or otherwise has a personal obligation to provide actual and necessary care to another, including a sick, aged, or special needs dependent who requires the prospective juror's personal care and attention, and comparable substitute care is either unavailable or impractical without imposing an undue economic hardship on the prospective juror or dependent person.

(2) If a person believes jury service would entail undue hardship for the person, a dependent of the person, or the public served by the person, the person may make and transmit an affidavit to the jury commissioner for which the person is summoned, stating the person's occupation or other facts that the person believes will excuse the person from jury service. The affidavit must be filed with the jury commissioner, who shall transmit it to the court. The court or the jury commissioner with the approval of the court shall excuse a prospective juror from jury service if the prospective juror satisfies the provisions of subsection (1).

(3) A person who is chronically incapacitated by illness or injury may request a permanent exclusion from jury service by making and transmitting an affidavit to the jury commissioner of the person's place of residence. The affidavit must include a certification by the person's physician that the person is chronically incapacitated by illness or injury. The affidavit must be filed with the jury commissioner, who shall

1 transmit it to the court. The court or jury commissioner with the approval of the court may permanently excuse a  
2 prospective juror from jury service if the prospective juror satisfies the provisions of this subsection (3).

3 (4) For purposes of subsection (3), a person is chronically incapacitated if the person has a  
4 condition due to an illness or injury that restricts the person's ability to leave the person's place of residence  
5 without the aid of supportive devices, such as crutches, a cane, a wheelchair, or a walker, that restricts the  
6 person's ability to leave home without the use of special transportation or the assistance of another person, or  
7 that causes leaving home to be medically contraindicated. Examples of factors to be taken into account in  
8 determining whether chronic incapacitation exists include but are not limited to the following:

9 (a) paralysis by a stroke or other cause;

10 (b) blindness;

11 (c) senility;

12 (d) loss of the use of a person's extremities requiring the assistance of another in leaving the  
13 person's place of residence;

14 (e) arteriosclerotic heart disease of such severity that a person is required to avoid all stress and  
15 physical activity; or

16 (f) a psychiatric problem if the illness is manifested in part by a refusal to leave home or is of such  
17 a nature that it would not be considered safe for the person to leave home unattended, even if there are no  
18 physical limitations.

19 (5) If a person is over 75 years of age and requests to be excused from jury service, the court shall  
20 grant the request."

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