

Gus J. Solomon Inn of Court, Group 4 (February, 2008) Jury Pool Diversity: Fact or Fiction

Oregonian Community Snap Shot
“What Would Make Jury
Duty Less of A Burden?”
(October 29, 2004)

Community Snapshot

1. Friday, October 29, 2004

What would make jury duty less of a burden?

Frustrated by high no-show rates among people called for jury duty, Multnomah County will spend the next year trying to figure out how to make serving on a jury less of a chore. Nearly one-quarter of potential jurors in the county ignore orders to appear.

2. One of the goals of any reform will be to ensure that juries reflect the larger community in terms of race, income level and education. The county will look at everything from reducing legalese in the courtroom to serving coffee and adding comfy chairs in the waiting room. Also on the table: allowing jurors to ask more questions during trials and letting them discuss evidence before deliberations begin.

Statewide, jurors are paid \$10 a day. Many would-be jurors say they cannot afford to take time off work to serve, and state Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace Carson said he plans to ask the Legislature to increase the stipend.

In Washington County, about 17 percent of residents who received a jury summons this year did not show up for court. The county, like many others across the state, scrapped its two-week period of jury duty in 2000 to cut down on the number of no-shows and make jury duty less of a chore. Jurors are finished after sitting on one trial, with most trials lasting one day. Those who aren't put on a jury can leave after a day of waiting and can't be called for jury duty again for at least two years.

Have you served on a jury lately? Was the experience positive or negative? What do you think Washington County could do to encourage people to serve?

Tell us what you think. We'd like to publish your response. To reply by e-mail, send responses to west@news.oregonian.com. To use The Oregonian's Inside Line, a free service inside the local calling area, dial 503-225-5555 from a touch-tone telephone, then enter category number 6689. Responses will be published in the Washington County Weekly.

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