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Representative Kristen Arrington and Senator Randolph Bracy Introduce Legislation to Raise Juror Pay

Kissimmee, FL - Earlier this week, **Representative Kristen Arrington (D- Kissimmee)** introduced **HB 739** to raise the rate of compensation for jurors and prohibit the use of peremptory challenges to strike prospective jurors in criminal jury trials. The legislation in the Senate, **SB 442** was filed by **Senator Randolph Bracy (D-Orlando)**.

“During a criminal jury trial, the accused have a right to a jury of their peers,” said **Representative Arrington**. “Right now, low compensation for jurors means that low income residents are discouraged from serving on juries. The current rate of juror pay does not even cover travel costs for many potential jurors who do not live near their local courthouse. By increasing the rate of compensation, we make it easier for everyone to serve on juries. Those juries will be a better representation of their local community.”

The bill also eliminates “peremptory” challenges which currently enable attorneys to remove jurors without reason or explanation. Study after study shows this practice is damaging because the end result is fewer non-white jurors and less diverse jury boxes. All-white juries convict Black defendants at a higher rate and this only exacerbates the harm that the criminal justice system already inflicts on people of color.

“Different viewpoints, different perspectives, and different voices are indispensable in jury pools to ensure justice for all,” said **Senator Bracy**. “The public’s engagement and trust in the court system is dependent on more jury diversity and stronger participation among minority groups. It is time we repeal peremptory challenges and pay jurors a fair and decent rate for performing this important constitutional duty.”

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