

## **Freedom to Defend and Punish**

As Americans, we have the role of promoting justice and protecting against the abuses of government. The American jury system is made of average citizens and responds to the needs of the American society.

Our jury system gives a voice to the people. The government doesn't have complete control over the fate of the people being prosecuted. The jury is an opportunity for many different opinions to be heard and be the factor in deciding sentences. This gives a sense of fairness and openness to the trials.

Since juries are randomly chosen, people come from different backgrounds, have different view points and some may be able to relate and sympathize with the plaintiff or the defendant. When you put together a randomly chosen group, the strengths and weaknesses balance out.

Jury duty is one of the only experiences that allows citizens to participate directly in our system of government. Service on a jury is both a right and an obligation of citizenship. When you take part in a trial as a juror you are given a huge responsibility. Someone's fate is in your hands. Many people try to avoid jury duty so they don't have to miss work, but they should consider it a privilege to take part in a trial. One exception among others that may be uncontrollable is for a full time student. If a trial lasts for days or even weeks, a student can't be excused for classes that long. Everyone should look at jury duty as a learning process.

People in society are always going to have different opinions on matters and what they think is right. The same thing happens in the legal system. The reason juries preserve justice so well is the jurors have never decided a criminal case and therefore aren't subject to the experiences a judge faces everyday. A jury's decision may be

better accepted in the community. The jurors only know as much as they hear in the court room so less biases are involved. There is no way to assure 100% accuracy in a system that can fall to human error but there are ways to make sure the procedures are followed and everyone is given an equal opportunity.

America gives us freedoms that people in other countries only wished they had. It is in the Constitution that everyone is subject to a trial by jury of their peers. As Americans it is our duty to keep our government in check and the best way to do so is showing the power of the people in a jury.