

On June 14th (my anniversary) a few of my children (I have 8) took me to Applebee's for lunch. For my own privacy I asked for the corner booth. I sat facing into the corner not facing the room. My then 7 month old baby boy needed to nurse so we did. A server (Jessica Balswick) came to me and stated that the manager asked her to come speak to me because she was a female. She said the manager said if we wanted to breastfeed we had to cover the baby's head with a blanket. I told her since it was hot out that I didn't have a blanket. She reiterated so I stopped nursing and asked to speak with the manager. As we waited the baby cried so I passed him across the table to my oldest son (almost 18 yrs old) so he could help comfort him as I was a bit shook up. The baby was inconsolable so I told my son to take him to the van and I would come to nurse him as soon as I spoke with the manager.

When the manager (Justin Arnolds) came I handed him a copy of the KRS 211.755 law that I keep in my diaper bag. I said "I would like you to educate yourself and your employees of this law that protects breastfeeding mothers." He handed it back to me after glancing over it and said "I know but somebody complained it was indecent exposure so you have to cover the baby with a blanket if you want to breastfeed here". I again held out the paper saying "look at part 3 of the law; it says no person shall interfere with a woman breastfeeding her child". He said the same exact thing as before "I know but somebody complained it was indecent exposure so you have to cover the baby with a blanket if you need to breastfeed here." At that exact moment our server came back with our meal and I said "We can not eat this because I have to go breastfeed my baby." As I exited the hostess asked what was wrong and I told her very briefly and said "I don't see anyone else eating under a blanket in here." I went to the van, nursed my baby, cried, and called my local LLL leader Karen. She told me to get the manager and servers name. She gave me names and addresses of people I needed to let know about this incident.

Our lawyer wrote a letter on June 27, 2007 to Applebee's restaurant (4009 Nicholasville Rd., Applebee's Corporate Headquarters 249 E Main St. (Mike Scanlon) The Lexington-Fayette County Health Dept. (Doraine Bailey), The KY Breastfeeding Promotion Coordinator (Becky Derifield) and the LLL Karen Brown.

The letter was ignored.

Our lawyer wrote another letter on July 25, 2007. On August 3, 2007 Thomas & King, Inc. Legal Department finally responded. Mr. Jonathan R. Weatherby, Jr. Associate General Counsel wrote "we regret that Ms. Ryan left without being served and would like the opportunity to personally invite her to return" "we are also considering keeping blankets in the restaurants for use by breastfeeding mothers that may not have them readily available as a result of this incident." My husband gasped when he read this response. They just don't get

it. It is like saying "Rosa Parks still has to sit at the back of the bus but we will give her a pillow so she is comfortable back there."

My midwife suggested I speak with the Senator that spearheaded getting the KRS211.755 law. I left a message for Senator Tom Buford and the next day he called me back. I asked him what recourse I had. He said "If you take them to small claims court you could get up to \$1,500.00" "if you take them to a higher court you may not even get enough to cover your legal fees." I told the Senator I was not interested in money. I want things to change. I want public attention on this cause. I have daughters that will someday breastfeed. I want action not money. I told Senator Buford about my nurse in/out idea and he thought it sounded great. In fact he said "let me know the date and I will come by and support you" he also said "hold a sign up saying -small children are not allowed to eat in this restaurant." I said "can I quote you on that" and he said "yes!" Senator Buford said "next time any one does this tell them to call the police and get a police report written up on it."

Since August is "World Breastfeeding Awareness Month" I am having one nurse-out at the Fayette Mall just to raise awareness. This is not in any way to attack the mall -- it is just a place to hang out at. I am late arranging this so it will not actually be in August but then again what is one day. It will be September 1st. The second event is actually to draw attention to Applebee's restaurant. Friends and supporters will decorate posters and display them for all to see.