



Mayor Gray: Do Your Civic Duty

By Shani O. Hilton

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Mayor Vince Gray was dismissed early this afternoon from the jury pool for a civil case. But at least he showed up.

Only about one-quarter of District residents who are summoned to jury duty each year even appear. Court spokeswoman Leah Gurowitz is quick to note that not all of the no-shows are absconding from their duties, however. Some may not have received the mailing, she says.

"If we know that they got the mailing and they did not show up, they are asked to come to court for a show-cause hearing," Gurowitz said.

At the show-cause hearing, residents are asked to explain why they failed to appear, and schedule another date to perform their civic duty. And if they don't show up to that hearing? They get a bench warrant and are ordered to appear before a judge.

Gurowitz says about 100 people get called in each week for not showing up to their summons, and about a dozen people get bench warrants. After that, fines and jail time are both possible, up to \$300 or seven days.

As for Gray? Since it's unlikely he'd ever get selected to be on a jury -- at least while he's still mayor -- his high-profile attendance seemed to be about encouraging residents to do their duty.