

Georgia Commission on Child Support
Judicial Council of Georgia/Administrative Office of the Courts
244 Washington Street, Atlanta, Georgia 30334
October 10, 2017 10:00 am
Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present:

Judge Michael Key
Representative Beth Beskin
Ms. Katie Connell
Judge Lisa Jones
Judge Emory Palmer (by phone)
Mr. Rick Smith (by phone)
Dr. Roger Tutterow (by phone)
Ms. Wendy Williamson

Guests Present:

Ms. Lauren Tanksley
Mr. Stephen Harris
Mr. Byron Cuthbert
Mr. Jason Naunas
Mr. Wayne Slear
Ms. Sarah White
Mr. Adam Medlin
Mr. Mark Rogers
Ms. Sarah Austin

Staff present:

Ms. Patricia Buonodono
Ms. Elaine Johnson
Mr. Bruce Shaw

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Review of Minutes – 10/31/16 Meeting

A vote was called to approve the October 31, 2016 minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

III. Committee Reports

A. Statute Review

1. LC 29 7649

Ms. Katie Connell brought forth the legislation that was approved by the Statute Review Committee. Since its approval by the Statute Review Committee, committee member Stephen Harris found a few more issues with the draft. Starting with line 34 and 35 where it states:

“Such order shall specify the date upon which the changed support payments shall begin.”

Mr. Harris pointed out how difficult it is to forecast a date certain is the farther out is and it may also prove difficult in UIFSA cases depending on the law of other states. From a DCSS standpoint, Mr. Harris stated it wasn't a concern given how they track cases but Mr. Harris did want to point the issue out for discussion in front of the full commission. After discussion, the 2 year window written into section 3 of the draft bill alleviates the forecasting concern. The primary change this draft legislation makes is to give the court discretion for additional worksheets as children age out rather than have it mandatory and to

allow for only a two year window for this to occur. Mr. Wayne Slear and Mr. Adam Medlin both expressed their common belief as noncustodial parents that mandatory worksheets is preferred.

Ms. Wendy Williamson informed the committee that in her district it was longtime common practice for judges to require worksheets for every child in case as they age out and asked how this would be affected by the new two year window. Several members felt that before the July 1, 2017 legislation this was not clearly authorized by the statute and it will not be clearly authorized by statute again.

Ms. Jill Travis outlined a second point raised by Mr. Harris arising from line 30 of the draft bill that reads:

“Separate worksheets shall show the full amount of support to be paid for all such children and the adjusted amount of support to be paid as each child becomes ineligible to receive support during such tow-year period.”

The question on the table is whether or not the wording “full amount of child support” the correct wording. One way to change this is to insert a defined term such as “final child support amount”. Another option would be to use a more clear term such as “monthly support”. Mr. Harris stated that after a discussion with Ms. Travis he believes “final child support amount” to be the correct term.

Judge Key called a vote to approve the legislation as submitted. The committee voted unanimous in the negative. Ms. Katie Connell moved to make two amendments:

1. Remove the lines on 34 and 35 that reads “Such order shall specify the date upon which the changed support payments shall begin” as lines 26 through 28 already provide the duration requirements of the order.
2. Replace “full amount of support” with “final child support amount” on line 31.

Judge Lisa Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Calculator/Technology

1. Update on online calculator

Ms. Elaine Johnson updated the commission the calculator. The online calculator is now almost a year old. Since deployment about 47 issues have been reported of which only four are outstanding. Ms. Johnson issued a special thank you to the AOC IT department employee Willie Alcantara. Between November 2017 and May 2018 fifteen trainings will be held throughout the state. Ms. Wendy Williamson added that so much training is taking place due to the discontinuation of the Excel version.

2. Retirement of Excel calculators

Ms. Wendy Williamson gave the recommendation coming up from the Technology/Calculator Meeting that the Excel calculator and EZ worksheet no longer be provided or supported after July 1, 2018. After discussion it was determined to support the excel calculator until after the expiration of the current maintenance contract ending in September. The committee voted unanimously to approve the expiration of support for the Excel calculator and the discontinuation of the EZ worksheet. Ms. Katie Connell moved to amend the date recommended by the Technology/Calculator committee from July 1 to September 30. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Guidelines Review

Judge Key explained that the commission is required by federal law to do a quadrennial review of the child support obligation table. 1:11

IV. New Business

A. Commission Appointments

B. Training Schedule

V. Schedule Next Meeting