

GEORGIA CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES COMMISSION

Economic Study Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2005

Senator Seth Harp and Dr. Roger Tutterow, Co-Chairmen of the Economic Study Subcommittee, called the Subcommittee Meeting to order at 3:00 pm. Commission Members reintroduced themselves, and members in attendance were as follows: Senator Seth Harp, Dr. Roger Tutterow Representative Earl Ehrhart; Judge Louisa Abbot; Judge Debra Bernes; Joy Hawkins; Sadie Fields; Annetta Panatera; Judge R. Michael Key; Dr. John Clayton Thomas; and Chuck Clay. This meeting was open to the public.

I. Purpose/Mission of the Economic Study Subcommittee

Senator Seth Harp opened the meeting, and then turned it over to Dr. Tutterow. Dr. Tutterow led the Subcommittee Members on a discussion of the definition and purpose of this specific Subcommittee. The consensus was that the main duty of the subcommittee is to develop the obligation tables, which will be a vital component of §19-6-15, as revised. This task includes putting in place a timeline to make recommendations to the full Commission as to the type and status of economic study and to have an obligation table created. Another related consideration of the Subcommittee will be whether it will be necessary to set short-term and long-term goals for developing Georgia specific economic data.

II. Economic Study

A. Background

Dr. Tutterow explained that in constructing obligation tables based on the cost of raising a child, most states have used economic data based on national averages, though some states have attempted to develop state-specific economic data. Developing Georgia-specific data is goal, but it may not be something that can be accomplished in the short term. It may be an option to adjust national data for intermediate purposes and develop a Georgia-specific study for the long term.

B. Participation by Georgia Board of Regents and Forming of Task Force

Senator Harp reported that the Board of Regents has pledged to assist with the economic study in any capacity needed and has encouraged involvement across the state. Pursuant to this offer, Dr. Tutterow shared that he is forming a task force of policy experts and economists from University of Georgia, Georgia State University, University of West Georgia, Georgia Southern University, Columbus State University, Georgia College & State University. Dr. Tutterow is awaiting word from a couple of other state economists. The task force will be reviewing studies and methods used by other states and discussing a timeline and other issues incumbent in

conducting a Georgia-specific study. The task force will be charged by the Commission to consider methodology for capturing the costs of raising children within Georgia and to identify whether Georgia costs vary from the national average and the sources of any variations. Senator Harp stated that a deadline of September 15, 2005 had been set for the work that will be done by this task force. It may come in the form of a report with recommendations on how Georgia should proceed. Rep. Ehrhart added that he would like to see this Economic Task Force become an ongoing laboratory to study the data and statistics of the costs of raising children so we can update those numbers on a regular basis to keep the obligation tables current with daily living costs.

C. Questions & Answers by Subcommittee Members

Led by Dr. Tutterow, the Subcommittee Members posed related questions and discussed study methods, including the possibility of contracting with outside sources for various aspects of the study and development of the obligation tables. The Subcommittee Members also discussed different sources and providers of economic information regarding the cost of raising children and the factors which are considered in calculating costs and variations from national average. Concerns were also raised about problems experienced in Tennessee and how the same problems may be avoided in Georgia. A further question inquired the approach of the Economic Consortium or Task Force. Dr. Tutterow said one of the purposes of this Subcommittee is to refine the charge to the Economic Task Force. The first approach of this group is to review existing state studies in regard to capturing the costs of raising children, and then study and consider how those costs can be captured in Georgia. Third, the Task Force will identify the differences in Georgia's costs of raising children as compared to the national average. Fourth, the Task Force will identify the sources of variations in the costs of raising children, such as the housing costs. The goal is to have the data compressed into obligation tables and back for this Subcommittee's review by late October so that the public hearings can be held in November.

Judge Key suggested that once the tables are completed, the Commission should put together an informational paper for the public explaining the tables and how they were developed.

III. Future Agenda Items/Meeting Dates

The subcommittee will meet to discuss further action once it receives further information from the Economic Task Force. However, an actual meeting date has not been set yet. Senator Harp adjourned the meeting.