

**Georgia Child Support Commission
Commission Meeting
Judge R. Michael Key, Chair**

**Friday, September 30, 2022
1:30 p.m.**

Meeting Minutes

The Georgia Child Support Commission (“Commission”) held this meeting via videoconferencing using Zoom webinar. Nine (11) out of the fifteen (15) Commission members attended in total. Commission members in attendance were:

Judge R. Michael Key, Chair	Charles C. “Chuck” Clay, Esq.	Kathleen B. Connell, Esq.
Rep. Houston Gaines	Judge Lisa Jones	Justice Shawn Ellen LaGrua
Judge Emory Palmer	Regina Quick, Esq.	Rep. Bonnie Rich
Dr. Roger Tutterow	Judge Connie L. Williford	

Executive Program Manager Elaine Johnson and Staff Attorney Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez served as staff for this meeting. Several other state employees and members of the public also attended this open meeting.

Welcome

Judge Key opened the meeting and gave special recognition to soon-to-be-retired Superior Court Judge Louisa Abbot who previously served extensively on the Child Support Commission. Executive Program Manager, Elaine Johnson, recalled her time working with Judge Abbot and expressed her appreciation for Judge Abbot’s strong leadership during the time when Georgia’s Income Shares guidelines were being constructed by the Commission.

Minutes

Judge Key asked Staff Attorney, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, if there was a quorum of Commission members to conduct a vote on the minutes from the August 19th meeting. Staff Attorney Lagueux-Alvarez noted that a quorum of nine (9) out of the fifteen (15) Commission members was present at that time. Two (2) additional Commission members joined the meeting a few minutes later. Judge Key asked whether there were any corrections to the Minutes from the Commission’s August 19, 2022, meeting that had been distributed previously by email. There were no corrections offered and those Minutes were unanimously approved.

Subcommittee Reports

Statute Review Subcommittee – The LIFE Act

Co-Chair Katie Connell, Statute Review Subcommittee, inquired whether the Commission wants that subcommittee to look into the changes to the Child Support Guidelines Statute (O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15(a.1)) brought about by the LIFE Act. Mr. Byron Cuthbert, an attorney for DHS/Division of Child Support Services, noted that agency does not think such work is necessary at this time. Ms. Connell offered that it may be appropriate for the Commission to wait and see if we get case

law from the appellate courts or a request from the appellate courts for the definition in the statute to be amended. Judge Key noted that the Commission stands ready to act on this topic if anyone or any entity brings forth an issue, but the Commission will not take any action on the LIFE Act amendments to the O.C.G.A 19-6-15(a.1) at this juncture.

Statute Review Subcommittee – Legislative Resolution

Co-Chair Connie Williford, Statute Review Subcommittee, reminded the Commission that member Regina Quick made a motion, which was passed by the Commission during their August 19, 2022, meeting, for a resolution to establish a joint legislative study committee on parenting time. Co-Chair Williford posed the question today asking who does the Commission want to ask to sponsor the resolution for the legislative study committee and the Commission held a brief discussion around this topic. Co-Chair Williford and member Regina Quick both recommended Senator Brian Strickland, a family law attorney, and a member of the Commission, on the Senate side. Member Regina Quick mentioned Rep. Mandi Ballinger on the House side. Ms. Quick noted that she would be happy to reach out to both of them. Rep. Gaines noted he'd been happy to help carry the resolution in the House. Judge Williford stated she will continue to work on this, especially with her efforts to speak with Sen. Strickland, and that she will report back to the Commission. Judge Key thanked the members for their efforts to secure legislative sponsors for the Resolution.

Technology and Calculator Subcommittee

Chair Regina Quick gave a brief update on the work of the Technology and Calculator Subcommittee. She thanked the Commission members for the "e-vote" approval on the motion to update the calculator to allow deleting of expired, shared worksheets. She reported that staff is working with AOC IT developers to make that change in the child support calculator. Ms. Quick also noted she anticipates holding two meetings before the end of the year, one on November 30, 2022, and a second on December 16, 2022. Chair Quick shared that she will continue working with staff on ideas that have been floating around the Technology and Calculator Subcommittee.

Economic Subcommittee

Chair, Dr. Roger Tutterow, Economic Subcommittee, reported that Dr. Jane Venohr, from the Center for Policy Research, Inc., Denver, Colorado, had presented to the Subcommittee her report on Georgia's 2022 Economic Study. He thanked her for her hard work on the report for Georgia. Dr. Tutterow then introduced economist, Dr. Venohr, to continue providing her findings and recommendations from the 2022 Economic Study.

2022 Economic Study Report Presentation

Dr. Venohr gave an extensive presentation on her findings and recommendations during the Commission's August 19th and now at today's meeting, she completed that presentation. (The findings in the report are extensive, and it is recommended that anyone reading these minutes also review Dr. Venohr's PowerPoint.) The PowerPoint from which Dr. Venohr presented her findings during both meetings, may be found on the Child Support Commissions' website at: https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2022/08/GA_GuidelinesAug19.pdf. The final version of this report will also be posted to the Commission's website once it is completed and approved by the Commission.

Questions and Discussion on the Economic Study Report

The Commission discussed Dr. Venohr's presentation and engaged in asking several clarifying and follow-up questions and some of those discussions are briefly summarized below.

- Member Katie Connell asked questions about the new Engel study and the impact it may have on decisions the Commission must make concerning Georgia's Basic Child Support Obligation (BCSO) table. Dr. Venohr explained that the Bureau of Labor Statistics changed their questions on how they captured food data, which lowered the Engel estimate in that latest study.
- The members discussed Dr. Venohr's recommendation to increase Georgia's BCSO table from a maximum high-income level of \$30,000 to \$40,000. The members agreed that when a table is adopted, the high-income level should be \$40,000.
- Staff Attorney Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez made an observation on our current Low-Income Deviation that results in a lower amount of child support, than would be the result of using a self-support reserve when following the Alabama calculation process. Dr. Venohr recommended Georgia consider the example of the North Carolina low-income self-support reserve calculation as it may be a better fit for Georgia.
- Member Connie Williford asked Dr. Venohr questions on parenting time. Dr. Venohr shared that most states, with the exception of California, layer their parenting time adjustment on top of the calculation.

Discussion on Next Steps

Chair Michael Key asked the Commission members to consider whether the Commission wants to bring a bill for the 2023 legislative session just to update the BCSO table. A few of the members expressed that they felt it best to wait and bring a bill for the 2024 session that will address all issues, including the table and outcomes from the Legislative Study Committee. Chair Key agreed with their observations that the Commission is not ready to bring a bill to the legislature for the 2023 legislative session.

During the meeting, member Regina Quick announced that she had successfully communicated with Senator Brian Strickland and that he agreed to sponsor a Resolution to form a parenting-time deviation study committee in the Georgia Senate.

Dr. Venohr's report will be discussed further at the Economic Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, October 19, 2022, and at the next Commission meeting on Friday, November 4, 2022.

Judge Key asked Staff member, Elaine Johnson, to explain to the Commission the information needed in considering a motion for the Commission to consider a contract with Dr. Venohr, to which Ms. Johnson supplied the details. Judge Williford then moved the Commission to approve proceeding with a contract with Dr. Venohr, Center for Policy Research, Inc., to focus on the parenting time deviation and the low-income deviation. That motion was seconded by Commission member Chuck Clay and passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Judge Key related to the members that there is a lot of conversation happening on the subject of legitimation in Georgia to make it easier for a child to be legitimated. He stated that as a matter of information and to see if there was an objection from the Commission members, he related that

he plans to submit a letter to Georgia's Department of Human Services in support of that agency's initiative to amend the legitimation process in Georgia. No opposition was voiced by any Commission members and Judge Key will proceed with that plan.

Public Comments

The Commission listened to comments given by four members of the public and noted comments by one person in the Zoom question and answer feature.

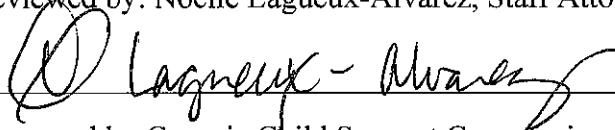
Adjournment

Details for all upcoming meetings may always be found on the Commission's website under the meeting notices page which may be found here: <https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/meeting-notices/>.

The next meeting of the Child Support Commission will be held on Friday, November 4, 2022, at 2 p.m., virtually in Zoom and at the offices of the Administrative Office of the Courts, 244 Washington St., SW, 3rd Floor, Atlanta, GA 30334, in the Ratley Conference Room.

This meeting adjourned at approximately 3:40 p.m.

Reviewed by: Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, Staff Attorney



Approved by Georgia Child Support Commission at
the Commission Meeting on November 4, 2022