

**Georgia Child Support Commission**  
**Statute Review Subcommittee**  
**Kathleen Connell, Esq., Co-Chair**  
**Hon. Connie Williford, Co-Chair**  
**Friday, April 21, 2023**  
**2:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

The Statute Review Subcommittee (“Subcommittee”) of the Georgia Child Support Commission (“Commission”) held this meeting via Zoom Webinar. Eight (8) Subcommittee members attended the meeting. The Subcommittee members in attendance were:

Co-Chair Kathleen “Katie” Connell, Esq.	and	Co-Chair Hon. Connie Williford
Mara Block, Esq.	Pat Buonodono, Esq.	Hon. Lisa Colbert
Byron Cuthbert, Esq.	Jason Naunas, Esq.	Christina Scott, J.D.

Executive Program Manager, Elaine Johnson, Staff Attorney, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, and Program Coordinator, Latoinna Lawrence, served as staff for this meeting. Several members of the public also attended this open meeting.

Co-Chair Judge Connie Williford opened the meeting, and it was shared that Judge Palmer, Chair of the Low-Income Deviation Study Committee, would not be able to attend today’s meeting. Judge Williford recommended that the Subcommittee start with the presentation by Dr. Jane Venohr with discussions on parenting time and begin discussions on the low-income deviation as time allowed. Staff member Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez agreed with this recommendation. Staff member Latoinna Lawrence did not review the Zoom rules for this meeting due to general awareness of procedural rules from prior meetings and due to time constraints.

Staff member Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez shared that we did not initially have quorum for a vote on the February 24, 2023, meeting minutes. Shortly into Dr. Venohr’s presentation, a quorum of eight (8) Subcommittee members was confirmed. Co-Chair Katie Connell noted that the minutes of the Subcommittee’s February 24, 2023, meeting were previously distributed. No edits to those minutes were requested. Subcommittee member Pat Buonodono moved to approve those minutes, Subcommittee member Mara Block seconded that motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved with no abstentions.

Dr. Jane Venohr of the Center for Policy Research, Inc. in Denver, Colorado started her presentation by commenting that the issues being discussed, parenting time and low-income deviation, are very important and shared that a lot of states have wrestled with these topics. Prior to this meeting, Dr. Venohr provided to staff two draft memos on these topics that were shared by staff with only the members of the Subcommittee for initial review during this meeting. Dr. Venohr explained that her presentation would give an overview of what would be covered, and then she would plunge into the different types of parenting time adjustments, which is a slower process. She began by reviewing the various deliverables required of her by her contract with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

Dr. Venohr noted several things, including: that Georgia's guidelines are legislative; Arizona and Kentucky use a method similar to Georgia's suggested, but never legislatively-adopted, "Schedule C" and that method is the "simplest;" many states require "court-ordered" parenting time before any adjustment/deviation is allowed; she believes Georgia needs a formula for both Parenting Time and the Low Income Deviation to foster consistency and predictability and that will be viable for Georgia for a while; there are pros and cons to accounting for parenting time through an "adjustment" as opposed to a "deviation" and she will review all of those; she wants to discuss further Georgia's statutory terminology of "Custodial Parent" and "Noncustodial Parent" noting that there is no perfect terminology and will offer ideas from other states; most states neighboring Georgia use the cross-credit method to account for parenting time; determining a parenting time deviation amount by netting out the final child support amount ("Line 13" of Georgia's child support worksheet) is "egregiously" inappropriate; she wouldn't suggest netting out the parents' BCSO amounts either, but that would be less egregious than netting out the parents' final child support amounts.

Next, Dr. Venohr spoke at length from a document that she had prepared for this meeting. Items discussed included, but were not limited to: discussion on cross credit with a multiplier, which is used in most states; states with no multiplier with the cross credit are Montana and Nevada; she discussed nonlinear formulas; formulas that create a cliff effect; Missouri, Nevada, and New Jersey start their time sharing at very, very low levels, and do not get any cliff effect; cross credit works best if there is a threshold of about 25% in parenting time; if you want a time-sharing adjustment that works for very low levels of time, then you probably don't want to go with cross credit; the advantage of a cross credit is that it is very understandable because you're creating a theoretical order for each parent; experience has shown that the cross credit with a multiplier is more easily understood by parents and state legislatures, which is important and results in transparency; discussed formulas used by Minnesota, Michigan, Kentucky, Colorado, to name a few states. During her presentation, Dr. Venohr demonstrated a cross-credit calculation with a multiplier for parenting time using Georgia's existing BCSO table and showed the Subcommittee where she reached a line in the calculation that demonstrated shared parenting.

Judge Williford pointed out to Dr. Venohr and the Subcommittee that our main issues are, how are we going to calculate parenting time in terms of what formula and what will be the unit of time used.

The Subcommittee discussed having Dr. Venohr's company add a disclaimer footer or page to the two documents prepared by her that are intended to serve as working drafts providing information to the Subcommittee for consideration and discussion. Dr. Venohr stated that she does not want anyone to think that the documents have been proposed to Georgia as solutions to parenting time and low-income deviation but are intended to serve for discussion purposes only. Once the disclaimer form is added, the documents will be available on the Child Support Commission's website under "Business of the Commission."

The Subcommittee Co-Chairs agreed that all other agenda items not discussed during this meeting will be rolled over to a future meeting.

The Subcommittee's upcoming meetings will all be via Zoom at the following dates/times:

- May 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.; June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m.; July 21<sup>st</sup> at 2:00 p.m.
- August 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m.; September 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

This meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.