

**Georgia Child Support Commission
Statute Review Subcommittee
Kathleen Connell, Esq., Co-Chair
Hon. Connie Williford, Co-Chair
Friday, August 18, 2023
1:30 p.m.**

Meeting Summary

The Statute Review Subcommittee (“Subcommittee”) of the Georgia Child Support Commission (“Commission”) held this meeting via Zoom Webinar. Nine (9) Subcommittee members attended this meeting. The Subcommittee members in attendance were:

Judge Connie Williford	Katie Connell, Esq.	Sarah Austin, Esq.
Patricia Buonodono, Esq.	Byron Cuthbert, Esq.	Judge Michael Key
Judge Emory Palmer	Regina Quick, 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 other Georgia Child Support Commission Subcommittees or Study Committees joined this meeting as panelists and members of the public also attended this open meeting.

At the very beginning of the meeting only seven (7) Subcommittee members were in attendance, one shy of quorum, but shortly into the meeting a quorum of nine members of the Subcommittee was achieved. Staff attorney, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez waited until an appropriate break in the conversation to note the presence of a quorum. Accordingly, Judge Williford moved to approve the minutes of the Subcommittee’s meeting on July 21, 2023, and Pat Buonodono seconded that motion. No changes to those minutes were requested and the motion to approve those minutes passed unanimously.

The Subcommittee continues to focus on alternatives to Georgia’s low-income and parenting time deviations. Chair Williford used the scope of service from the contract with Dr. Jane Venohr of the Center for Policy Research, Inc., to lead a discussion around proposing changes to Georgia’s parenting time deviation. Previous reports by Dr. Venohr highlighted the many various parenting time formulas used by states across the country and she noted that all of them are “simple” if they are automated. The Subcommittee focused on which formula it thinks would work best for Georgia and honed-in on two—the formula used by Minnesota and Michigan (MN/MI), and another called the “cross-credit” formula that is used by many states. It was noted that the cross-credit formula is easier to understand theoretically but leads to a “cliff effect” which the Commission’s Parenting Time Deviation Study Committee recommended avoiding. Dr. Venohr noted that Illinois uses the cross-credit formula and is in the midst of determining a change to that formula to avoid the cliff effect. That is still a work in progress and no other state, to our knowledge, has tried that update to the cross-credit formula. Regardless of which formula is determined to be best for Georgia, each formula has a way to address the fact that raising a child in two households costs more than raising a child in one household. The MN/MI formula

acknowledges that fact by using an “exponent” and the cross-credit formula uses a “multiplier.” A fair amount of discussion centered on the best exponent or multiplier to use for Georgia. Dr. Venohr noted that for the MN/MI formula, the higher the exponent used the smaller the parenting time adjustment would be. Dr. Venohr noted that she cannot make recommendations on how to handle “split parenting” until a formula is picked. At the next meeting, Dr. Venohr will discuss how split parenting would work with the MN/MI formula. Next, the Subcommittee discussed the best way to define a unit of time for measuring parenting time.

At approximately 3:00 p.m., the Subcommittee switched its focus to the low-income deviation. Dr. Venohr provided an updated report on alternatives to Georgia’s low-income deviation based on a Basic Child Support Obligation Table using only Rothbarth estimates, as the Commission voted to recommend to the Georgia General Assembly during the Commission’s last meeting on August 11, 2023. Dr. Venohr’s report provided three options and Judge Palmer noted that he prefers the option labeled “Option 1500.A.” Judge Palmer also noted that this option would mean that Georgia would no longer handle low-income cases through a deviation but would be handled as an adjustment that automatically occurs in the process of calculating child support. The Subcommittee then discussed when to apply such an adjustment, either based off of the BCSO amount or after the additional expenses had been added in Schedule D. Dr. Venohr noted that MN/MI do a low-income adjustment after additional “Schedule D” expenses.

The next subcommittee meeting will take place via Zoom at 10:00 a.m. on September 21, 2023. The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.