

**Georgia Child Support Commission
Commission Meeting
Judge R. Michael Key, Chair
Tuesday, May 2, 2023
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Meeting Minutes

The Georgia Child Support Commission held a hybrid meeting, taking place at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center in Atlanta and via Zoom Webinar. Nine (9) Commission members attended. The Commission members in attendance were:

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| Judge R. Michael Key, Chair | Kathleen B. Connell, Esq. | Rep. Chuck Efstrotation |
| Rep. Houston Gaines | Justice Shawn LaGrua | Regina Quick, Esq. |
| Christina Scott, J.D. | Dr. Roger Tutterow | Judge Connie L. Williford |

Chair Key greeted and acknowledged all of the Commission members attending this meeting, those on Zoom and those in person. 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 by Zoom. Chair Key shared that Governor Kemp had appointed a new member to the Commission from the House of Representatives, Rep. Chuck Efstrotation. Chair Key asked the members in attendance to introduce themselves for the benefit of Rep. Efstrotation. Each attending member made their introduction and greeting as well as Rep. Efstrotation who introduced himself to the members.

Chair Key then administered the Oath of Office swearing-in Rep. Chuck Efstrotation as a new member of the Georgia Child Support Commission filling the House of Representatives vacancy previously held by former Rep. Bonnie Rich. This brings the membership of the Commission to a total of 15 members as required by O.C.G.A. 19-6-51. Chair Key recognized member, Justice Shawn LaGrua who shared that, regrettably, she will be stepping down from this Commission because of her many other appointments to leadership roles in the judicial branch and professional commitments, but she will always stand ready to help the Commission in any way she can. Chair Key, other Commission members, and staff thanked her for her many years of service to the Commission. Chair Key called upon staff member, Latoinna Lawrence, who reviewed the Zoom rules for all panelists and attendees to participate in today's meeting.

Chair Key moved to the next order of business to review the previously distributed meeting minutes from the November 4th, 2022, meeting. Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, staff attorney, reported that there were eight members of the Commission present out of the 15 members, meeting the quorum requirement. There were no recommendations by the members for edits to the draft minutes. The motion was so moved, and the minutes were approved. Staff will post the approved minutes on the Child Support Commission's website.

Chair Key called upon Dr. Roger Tutterow to provide a report on the work from the Economic Subcommittee and unfortunately, immediately after the minutes vote, Dr. Tutterow had

to leave the meeting due to a conflict. Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez provided the Economic Subcommittee update noting that Georgia's 2022 Economic Final Report was completed in late December and is posted on the Commission website. In January of 2023, that Final Report was sent to the Governor, all members of the Georgia General Assembly, the Division of Child Support Services, the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, the Council of Superior Court judges, the Council of Juvenile Court judges, and the Council of Magistrate judges. She shared that Dr. Tutterow asked staff to schedule the next meeting of this Subcommittee on June 21, 2023, for discussions on Georgia's Basic Child Support Obligation (BCSO) Table. During that meeting, the Subcommittee will continue to focus their attention on the recommendation of a table or tables for the full Commission to consider at their August 11, 2023, meeting. Chair Key stated his thanks and on behalf of the Commission, to the 16 Superior Court Clerks for their cooperation in furnishing documents to staff for the case sampling component of the 2022 Economic Study.

Chair Key called upon Elaine Johnson to give a PowerPoint presentation on data staff gleaned from the case sampling that was part of the 2022 Economic Study. Ms. Johnson noted common errors and trends found in the orders and worksheets from the 472 cases from the 16 counties that were included in that sampling. Ms. Johnson noted that many errors indicate proofreading the worksheet and order would serve to decrease the level of errors, while training is also necessary to resolve other issues. She also stated that the issue that resulted in the most errors was the lack of entry of the cost of health insurance coverage for children on Schedule D. She added that often parents do not yet have insurance at the time of entry of an order, which creates this void of information in the worksheet and order. Justice Shawn LaGrua offered to help staff get on the agenda for an annual Superior Court staff attorney training. Member Judge Connie Williford agreed with Justice LaGrua on the recommendation for training of the judge's staff attorneys. Member Regina Quick asked that staff furnish her the list of errors that were related to Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) cases so she may address those with the agency. Ms. Johnson also shared that they have routinely shared this kind of information with DCSS in the past and will do so again with this study.

Chair Key called upon Statute Review Subcommittee Co-Chair Katie Connell to provide a report on the work of that Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is also Co-Chaired by Judge Connie Williford. Co-Chair Connell reported that staff has scheduled meetings for the Subcommittee through September, which has been helpful to the members and in notifying the public of these open meetings. She shared that the Subcommittee is continuing its work with Dr. Jane Venohr of the Center for Policy Research, Inc., on potential updates to the statute on the low-income and parenting time deviations. She also reported that a public survey about the statutory terms custodial and noncustodial parent went live on the Commission website on March 12, 2023. Latoinna Lawrence shared a graph of the results from that survey through April 15, 2023, with the majority voting to keep the terms the same, i.e., custodial, and noncustodial parent. That survey will remain open for several more months. Co-Chair Connell called upon Latoinna Lawrence, staff, to report on the status of the survey published on the Child Support Commission website to collect data on the possible use of new terms to replace custodial and noncustodial parent in the statute, O.C.G.A. § 19-6-15. Latoinna reported that out of 879 responses received as of April 15, 2023, most votes were to retain the current terms.

Chair Key called upon Regina Quick, Chair of the Technology and Calculator Subcommittee to report on the work of that Subcommittee. Ms. Quick gave an update on a new feature of the calculator—deleting shared and expired worksheets—which is functioning well. Ms. Quick also noted that the Technology and Calculator Subcommittee continues to look into ways to simplify and improve the Child Support Calculator, especially as to the low-income deviation. She shared that the inclusion of preexisting orders in the worksheet is fraught with problems for judges who have to rely on a lack of the best documentation and evidence of whether or not there is compliance with all the elements necessary to get credit for that preexisting order. This is an area of continued discussion for how this may be improved in the calculator and in through training. The next meeting for this Subcommittee has not yet been scheduled.

Chair Key called upon Staff Attorney, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, to report on the matter of the Child Support Commission having a YouTube channel for posting recordings of Commission meetings. Ms. Lagueux-Alvarez shared that the Commission now has a YouTube channel and asked the Commission how it would prefer those recordings of meetings be posted, by either live streaming or by uploading recordings after the adjournment of meetings. Chair Key left the decision up to the staff and the result was a decision to upload recorded videos after each meeting. The members supported this decision. Ms. Lagueux-Alvarez pointed out that in the past folks have already taken it upon themselves to post videos from Commission meetings privately, such as through YouTube. So, if you search YouTube, you may find other videos of previous meetings. She shared that this is another reason for the Commission to have its own YouTube channel because we will then have the official record, the custodian of the recordings from meetings permanently on YouTube for public access to see exactly what occurred during a meeting.

Chair Key called upon Statute Review Subcommittee Co-Chair Williford, in the absence of Sen. Brian Strickland who, due to an unforeseen conflict, was unable to attend this meeting, to report on the status of the Commission's Resolution for a legislative Study Committee. Co-Chair Williford reported that Sen. Strickland filed SR-159 during the 2023 legislative session to create a study committee on parenting time in the Georgia Senate but noted that SR-159 did not pass. However, Senator Strickland chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee and is willing to convene meetings on this topic as needed. To do this, Sen. Strickland says we will need to identify someone to take the lead, come up with a list of who we want to invite to speak, and identify what material we want covered so that he can come up with an agenda and get a hearing scheduled. Rep. Efration concurred with this recommendation. Chair Key stated the logical people to take the lead on this will be Co-Chairs Williford and Connell, along with the staff. So, he asked that this group develop a plan and go with it.

Chair Key invited Commission member Katie Connell to speak on how legitimation intersects with the work of the Commission. She noted that it comes up at Statute Review Subcommittee meetings when discussing parenting time and that Georgia is in the extreme minority of states on how we handle legitimation. She added that Georgia needs to look at changing legitimation because the current process is hard for Georgia families to navigate. She explained that parenting time becomes an issue because often we will have very involved parents, but one parent does not have any legal rights to the child and therefore no legal responsibilities to the child and that this flies in the face of Georgia public policy where we want children to have two parents who are responsible for the children both emotionally and financially. There was a

lengthy and informative discussion by the members including ideas envisioned by Chair Key on creating a certificate of legitimation issued by a court of competent jurisdiction along with a registry at Vital Records where all legitimations would be filed and accessible. Co-Chair Williford agreed that legitimation is an issue for the Commission because it relates to child support. No decisions for the next steps were identified during this meeting.

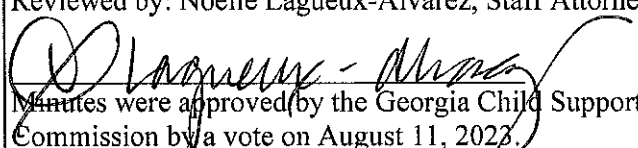
Chair Key called on Staff Attorney, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, to speak on HB-499, filed during the 2023 legislative session, which sought to amend the child support guidelines to extend the duration of support for what that bill termed a “disabled child”. While that bill did not pass into law, Staff wants to ensure that this bill stays on the Commission’s radar, as it may come up again during the next legislative session. Staff will be inviting speakers to the Commission’s August 11th meeting to address ways that bill could negatively impact a disabled child’s federal and state benefits such as social security and Medicaid.

Chair Key called upon Staff Member Elaine Johnson to address the membership of the Commission. Ms. Johnson shared that she monitors the executive orders appointing members to the Commission and shared that seven members’ terms will end on July 1, 2023. The Governor’s office is actively working on reappointments for those seven members and a replacement for Justice LaGrua who previously notified the governor’s office of her desire to be removed from the Commission. Ms. Johnson noted that with the addition of Rep. Efstration, the Commission is currently at the full complement of 15 members.

A member of the public and frequent attendee at all Commission meetings, Mr. Raja Antone, who runs a non-profit called the LeadOffFoudation, gave a presentation advocating for “parental equality” and revising the negative perception of noncustodial parents. There were no other public comments.

The next Commission meeting will be a hybrid meeting that will take place on August 11, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center in Atlanta and via Zoom.

This meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Reviewed by: Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, Staff Attorney

Minutes were approved by the Georgia Child Support
Commission by a vote on August 11, 2023.