

**Georgia Child Support Commission
Statute Review Subcommittee
Kathleen Connell, Esq., Co-Chair
Hon. Connie Williford, Co-Chair
Thursday, September 21, 2023
10:00 a.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
Patricia Buonodono, Esq.
Rep. Chuck Efration

Katie Connell, Esq.
Judge Lisa Colbert
Judge Emory Palmer

Sarah Austin, Esq.
Byron Cuthbert, 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. Co-Chair Connell opened the meeting at 10:02 a.m. and Latoinna Lawrence reviewed procedures for efficient handling of this hybrid meeting.

The first item on the agenda was a discussion regarding alternatives to Georgia’s current low-income deviation and parenting time deviation. Economist, Dr. Jane Venohr, led a discussion around what would be the best low-income table for Georgia to adopt. She spoke about the three options for a low-income table that she proposed--which she called 1500.A, 1500.B, and 1500.C., in her accompanying report that may be found on the Commissions website. She talked through some case scenarios to give context to how the three various tables would function in real cases, not just theoretically. A significant amount of that discussion focused on the income level at which the low-income adjustment would completely phase out. Judge Emory Palmer, Chair of the Low-Income Deviation Study Committee, moved to recommend to the Commission that option 1500.C be used in a proposed low-income adjustment for Georgia. Co-Chair Connie Williford seconded that motion and it passed unanimously, 9-0. Judge Emory Palmer also moved that Dr. Venohr’s proposed “Sequence A” for the low-income adjustment be recommend to the Commission for use in a proposed low-income adjustment for Georgia. Co-Chair Katie Connell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 9-0.

At 11:27 a.m., the Subcommittee turned its attention to a proposed parenting time adjustment for Georgia. After many months of previous discussion about which formula to use in a proposed parenting time adjustment, Co-Chair Katie Connell moved to adopt the “Minnesota/Michigan formula.” Subcommittee member Christina Scott seconded that motion, and it passed unanimously, 9-0. Next the Subcommittee considered which exponent within the MN/MI formula would be best for Georgia. There was some prolonged discussion about which

exponent was best—2, 2.5, or 3. Ultimately, Subcommittee member Pat Buonodono moved to recommend to the Commission that the 2.5 exponent be used in a proposed parenting time adjustment for Georgia. Subcommittee member Rep. Efstration had to drop off the meeting and the quorum changed from 9 to 8 members. Co-Chair Katie Connell seconded that motion and it passed unanimously, 8-0.

Next, the Subcommittee turned to defining a unit of measure for parenting time. Co-Chair Connie Williford moved to adopt a definition of the unit of measurement for parenting time as follows:

Parenting time shall be determined by calculating the number of days a parent spends with a child in a two-year period for an annual average. “Days” for purposes of this section is:

- (a) the total number of overnights a parent spends with the child OR
- (b) In circumstances where a parent has shorter but regular and recurring daytime periods with a child, the total hours of parenting time in the annual average divided by twenty-four hours, including any hours spent overnight, if applicable.

Co-Chair Katie Connell seconded that motion and with a quorum of 8, the motion passed with 7 yea’s and 1 abstention.

Co-Chair Connie Williford moved to remove the current low-income and parenting time deviations from the statute, while acknowledging that judges would still retain discretion over the final child support amount through use of the non-specific deviation, if deemed necessary by the judge. Subcommittee member Pat Buonodono seconded that motion and with a quorum of 8, it passed with 7 yea’s and 1 abstention.

Lastly, Co-Chair Katie Connell moved to approve the minutes of the Subcommittee’s meeting on August 18, 2023, which had been distributed previously to all Subcommittee members by email. No changes to those minutes were requested. Co-Chair Connie Williford seconded that motion and, with a quorum of 8, it passed with 7 yea’s and 1 abstention.

All other agenda items were tabled until the next scheduled meeting, which will take place on October 3, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.

This meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.