

**Georgia Child Support Commission  
Commission Meeting  
Judge R. Michael Key, Chair  
Friday, November 17, 2023  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Summary**

The Georgia Child Support Commission (“Commission”) held a hybrid meeting, taking place at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center in Atlanta and via Zoom Webinar. Ten (10) Commission members attended. The Commission members in attendance were:

Judge R. Michael Key, Chair  
Rep. Houston Gaines  
Regina Quick, Esq.  
Judge Connie L. Williford

Chuck Clay, Esq.  
Judge Benjamin Land  
Christina Scott, J.D.

Kathleen B. Connell, Esq.  
Judge Emory Palmer  
Dr. Roger Tutterow

Executive Program Manager, Elaine Johnson, Program Manager, Kurt Bryan, 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, in person and by Zoom.

Chair Key opened the meeting at approximately 10:05 a.m., welcoming all. Introductions were made by those attending online and in person. The Commission’s new Program Manager, Kurt Bryan made a special introduction as he will succeed Executive Program Manager, Elaine Johnson, upon her retirement on March 1, 2024. Chair Key and Elaine Johnson paid a special tribute to the late Judge Worcester, who was a member of the Commission’s Economic Subcommittee and passed away in August 2023. Commission members Katie Connell, Chuck Clay, Regina Quick, Christina Scott, and Roger Tutterow were sworn in for an additional term on the Commission by Chair Key. Long-serving Executive Program Manager was honored with a letter from Chief Justice Boggs noting her many decades of outstanding service to the State of Georgia. Latoinna Lawrence reviewed procedures for the efficient handling of this hybrid meeting.

A quorum of 9 out of 15 members was established at 10:12 a.m. Judge Emory Palmer had a scheduling conflict and departed at 10:30 a.m. Regina Quick had a similar scheduling conflict and arrived at 10:40 a.m. Despite that departure and arrival, at all times during votes, there were at least 8 Commission members present—the minimum needed for quorum. Chair Key noted that minutes from the August 11, 2023, Commission meeting had been previously distributed to all members. No corrections to those minutes were requested and they were unanimously approved.

Dr. Roger Tutterow gave updates on the Economic Subcommittee. That Subcommittee met on June 21 and July 26, 2023, resulting in the recommendation of a new Basic Child Support Obligation Table (“BCSO Table”) for Georgia. That proposed BCSO Table was approved by the

Commission at its meeting on August 11, 2023, and will be proposed in legislation to be presented to the General Assembly during the 2024 legislative session.

Leadership from the Statute Review Subcommittee gave updates. Judge Emory Palmer spoke first on proposed changes to the low-income deviation. Judge Palmer reported that at its meeting on September 21, 2023, the Statute Review Subcommittee unanimously voted to recommend the following changes to the low-income deviation: (1) remove the current Low-Income Deviation from the statute and replace it with a Low-Income Adjustment, (2) as part of the proposed new Low-Income Adjustment, use the “low-income table option 1500.C” developed by economist, Dr. Venohr, and (3) apply the proposed new Low-Income Adjustment after the additional expenses on Schedules D & E have been included. As this was a recommendation from a subcommittee, no second to the call for a vote on the issue was needed and the recommendation to propose a Low-Income Adjustment as described above passed unanimously.

Katie Connell spoke about proposed changes to the Parenting-Time Deviation. Katie Connell reported that at its meeting on September 21, 2023, the Statute Review Subcommittee unanimously voted to recommend the following changes to the Parenting Time Deviation: (1) remove the current Parenting Time Deviation from the statute and replace it with a Parenting Time Adjustment, (2) as part of the proposed new Parenting Time Adjustment, use the formula that Minnesota and Michigan use in their respective parenting time adjustments, but with an exponent of 2.5 and (3) in defining a unit of measurement for parenting time, use one very similar to Oregon’s definition with minor changes agreed upon by the Statute Review Subcommittee. As this was a recommendation from a subcommittee, no second to the call for a vote on the issue was needed and the recommendation to propose a Parenting Time Adjustment as described above passed unanimously.

Kurt Bryan gave an update on the work of the Technology and Calculator Subcommittee on behalf of Subcommittee Chair Regina Quick, noting that it has not met this year, however, staff is busy with updates and multiple tasks related to the calculator.

Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez spoke on the legislative bill for 2024. She and fellow staff members have been drafting proposed amendments to Georgia’s Child Support Guidelines statute in accordance with previous Commission decisions and in anticipation of the votes on the changes to the Low-Income and Parenting Time Deviations held today. Ms. Lagueux-Alvarez noted that the proposed amendments to O.C.G.A. 19-6-15 fall into four categories: (1) updating the BCSO Table to adjust for changes in child-rearing expenses over time and increasing the BCSO Table’s vertical axis to \$40,000, (2) replacing the Low-Income Deviation with the proposed new Low-Income Adjustment, (3) replacing the Parenting Time Deviation with a proposed new Parenting Time Adjustment that will include a formula to determine an economically-sound adjustment amount, and (4) “proverbial clean-ups” to the statute including adding new terms as needed to carry out the other proposed amendments. Staff will finalize the proposed bill with Legislative Counsel, Holly Carter, and circulate it to all Commission members. Katie Connell moved to conduct an e-vote on whether to approve the proposed bill as drafted by staff and legislative counsel in lieu of a full meeting on the matter and that motion was seconded by Chuck Clay. That motion passed unanimously.

Byron Cuthbert an attorney at DHS/DCSS presented on a draft amendment to the statute submitted by DCSS staff and attorney Pat Buonodono regarding adding a provision about VA benefits to O.C.G.A. 19-6-15(f)(4). Legal Aid attorney, Sarah Austin, gave feedback about those amendments. Katie Connell moved that staff include the changes discussed by Byron Cuthbert about VA benefits in the proposed legislation staff is currently drafting and compiling. That motion was seconded by Chuck Clay and passed unanimously.

Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez spoke on the history of HB 499, that was filed in 2023 and which proposes to extend the duration of child support past the age of majority if a child is deemed “disabled” as defined by that Bill. Georgia House Representative Bill Hitchins and a mother of a disabled adult, Jill Sapp, spoke on the merits of HB 499. Rep. Hitchens also provided some history of the bill and its impetus. It was noted that Florida recently enacted legislation to provide support for disabled adults from their parents, but that was not codified within Florida’s Child Support Guidelines as HB-499, as currently drafted, proposes to do.

Two members of the public offered public comment, both through Zoom. Wayne Slear offered his opinion on HB-499. Raja Antone gave comment on a few topics including that he thinks Georgia’s child support laws are punitive against noncustodial parents and fathers.

This meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.