

**Low Income Deviation Study Committee**  
**Judge Emory Palmer, Chair**  
**Tuesday, September 22, 2020**  
**10:00 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.**

**Meeting Summary**

**Welcome and Introductions**

Judge Emory Palmer, Chair, made opening remarks. Latoinna Lawrence conducted the roll call to confirm attendees.

**Review Survey Analysis**

Staff attorney, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, reported on both the judicial and public responses to the Low-Income Deviation (LID) surveys. The survey was originally developed with only judges in mind as staff anticipated developing a second survey for public use. However, at the direction of Commission Chair Judge Michael Key, the same survey questions were asked of both judges and members of the public.

**Judicial Responses**

Twenty-six superior court judges responded to the LID survey between January-May of 2020. Staff conducted a comprehensive review of those judicial responses and an analysis is included in the LID Study Committee's Report to the Child Support Commission which may be found here: [https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/03/LowIncomeDeviationReport\\_12-04-2020\\_CombinedFiles\\_Website.pdf](https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/03/LowIncomeDeviationReport_12-04-2020_CombinedFiles_Website.pdf).

**Public Responses**

Staff received survey responses from 100 respondents from 39 counties across the state. A majority of 68% identified themselves as attorneys. The other respondents self-identified as one of the following: custodial parent, noncustodial parent, mediator, DCSS staff, or a member of the general public. The online survey was available to the public from the end of January 2020 through March 2020. Staff conducted a comprehensive review of those public responses and an analysis is included in the LID Study Committee's Report to the Child Support Commission which may be found here: [https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/03/LowIncomeDeviationReport\\_12-04-2020\\_CombinedFiles\\_Website.pdf](https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/03/LowIncomeDeviationReport_12-04-2020_CombinedFiles_Website.pdf).

**Presentation by Mark Rogers**

Mark Rogers, an economist and member of the LID Study Committee, presented PowerPoint slides that he created on low-income issues and how those issues impact individuals, community, and society. Mr. Rogers recommended we avoid number crunching related to individuals, but rather look to what broader studies show about the impact on the community. He referred to information from Georgia's 2018 Guidelines Review, noting that none of the cases in that review's case sampling included a low-income deviation. He also noted that Georgia does not have a self-support reserve built in as most states do.

### **Discussion of Committee Ideas on Possible Changes to the Current Low-Income Deviation**

Chair, Judge Emory Palmer, led a discussion on possible changes to the low-income deviation which may be found in the LID Study Committees Report to the Child Support Commission, located here: [https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/03/LowIncomeDeviationReport\\_12-04-2020\\_CombinedFiles\\_Website.pdf](https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/03/LowIncomeDeviationReport_12-04-2020_CombinedFiles_Website.pdf).

Study Committee members discussed the propriety of the Basic Child Support Obligation table amounts because if there is a need to deviate all the time, it ceases to be a deviation and is simply the way low-income cases are handled. A discussion was had around the issue of a noncustodial parent with children with the same custodial parent and those with children with different custodial parents and the disparity between the amounts of child support those noncustodial parents are ordered to pay.

### **Schedule Next Meeting**

There was no next meeting scheduled for the LID Study Committee, but all Study Committee members will be invited to attend the Child Support Commission meeting scheduled for December 4, 2020, at which Judge Palmer will present the LID Study Committee's Report.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.