

**Georgia Commission on Child Support
Commission Meeting
Judge R. Michael Key, Chair**

**Friday, April 29, 2022
1:30 p.m.**

Meeting Minutes

The following Georgia Child Support Commission (“Commission”) members were present at the Child Support Commission meeting held virtually via Zoom Webinar on Friday, April 29, 2022:

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| Judge R. Michael Key, Chair | Charles C. “Chuck” Clay, Esq. | Judge Lisa G. Colbert |
| Kathleen B. Connell, Esq. | Rep. Houston Gaines | Judge Lisa Jones |
| Justice Shawn Ellen LaGrua | Rep. Bonnie Rich | Christina Scott, J.D. |
| Dr. Roger Tutterow | Judge Connie L. Williford | |

Executive Program Manager Elaine Johnson, Staff Attorney Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, and Program Coordinator Latoinna Lawrence served as staff and 19 guests attended this open meeting.

Welcome & Housekeeping

Judge R. Michael Key, Chair of the Commission, called the meeting to order and welcomed all. Commission staff member, Latoinna Lawrence, gave instructions for attendees to indicate when they wish to speak, including giving public comment, during this virtual meeting.

Judge Key posthumously thanked Mark Rogers—an economist who served over the years on several Child Support Commission committees—for his decades of dedicated service, including most recently on the Parenting Time Deviation Study Committee and the Economic Subcommittee. Dr. Tutterow, Chair of the Commission’s Economic Subcommittee, also acknowledged Mark Rogers’ many contributions. Judge Connie L. Williford, Commission member, commented that although she had not served on the Commission very long and had not met Mr. Rogers, she appreciated him. The Commission members concurred with these comments.

Review and Approval of Minutes from Commission Meeting on December 10, 2021

Commission Staff Attorney, Ms. Lagueux-Alvarez, confirmed that a quorum of nine Commission members was present. Judge Key stated that the minutes had been distributed to the members prior to the meeting and asked if there were any recommended changes. None being suggested, Judge Key stated that the minutes of the Commission’s December 10, 2021, meeting were approved. Two Commission members—Rep. Gaines and Mr. Chuck Clay—joined the meeting after the approval of the minutes, ultimately bringing the number of Commission members in attendance to eleven.

Update from Economic Subcommittee

Chair, Dr. Roger Tutterow, gave an update on the 2022 economic study, noting that good progress had been made. To ensure a comprehensive view of Georgia, Dr. Tutterow explained that he

previously developed an algorithm that has been used in the past for the Commission's economic studies and for this current study. The algorithm gives us geographic diversity but has in the aggregate a combination of counties that looks like the state in terms of population density and per capita income. A total of 15 counties were identified for this case sampling and, to ensure a high enough sample size, child support orders from those counties were pulled for the months of September and October 2021. All of Georgia's 159 counties were included in the selection process, except the 12 counties sampled in the 2018 study. The counties included in the 2022 case sampling are: Appling, Early, Echols, Elbert, Fannin, Fayette, Forsyth, Glascock, Glynn, Houston, Paulding, Rockdale, Stewart, Troup, and Ware. To gather those orders, staff initially sent a letter, and then communicated extensively with the Clerks of Superior Court in those counties and traveled to two counties to ensure proper collection of the needed court orders, child support worksheets, and other related documents. Staff contacted DCSS directly and worked with Ryan Bradley to secure the DCSS orders/worksheets and payment summaries. Staff started receiving orders/worksheets from clerks and DCSS at the end of January 2022 and began data entry in a spreadsheet. That spreadsheet contains data from approximately 400 court orders—more than in any prior economic study—for the case sampling. Dr. Tutterow also stated that the AOC executed a contract with Dr. Jane Venohr, Center for Policy Research, Inc. (CPR), to conduct the 2022 Economic Study at a cost of \$60,000, which includes \$15,000 for an updated study by Dr. Betson as part of the Betson/Engel study. A draft report from Dr. Venohr is anticipated by July 1, 2022. The Economic Subcommittee will meet in early July and review that draft report. The final report from Dr. Venohr will be furnished by July 31, 2022, and Dr. Venohr plans to present her report to the Commission via Zoom on Friday, August 19, 2022. Dr. Tutterow commended the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts ("AOC") and the Commission's staff for its excellent work thus far. Commission staff member Elaine Johnson commented on and acknowledged the cooperation of the clerks involved in the case sampling. Judge Key thanked Dr. Tutterow for his leadership and the work of the subcommittee.

Public Comment Opportunity

Judge Key reminded all guests who wished to make public comments at the end of this meeting to type their name in the Zoom chat feature.

Update from Technology & Calculator Subcommittee

Chair Regina Quick was unable to attend this meeting and asked Commission Staff member Elaine Johnson to give this report. Ms. Johnson reported that developers in the AOC's IT Department worked with Commission staff to conduct two successful deployments of the Child Support Calculator in early January 2022. The first deployment was to update security for the calculator and the second was to update the Schedule B self-employment taxes paid formula as required in O.C.G.A. § 19-6-53(a)(7). Staff is currently working with those developers on a few functionality upgrades for the calculator, and an enhancement to the self-employment calculator, but there is no confirmed date yet for the next deployment. Ms. Johnson acknowledged the professionalism of the IT developers and indicated her appreciation for their work. She also commented on the deployment process and how every effort is made to make these processes as unobtrusive as possible for the public. She also reminded everyone that training information and resources on the calculator are available on the Child Support Commission website. She concluded by stating a Technology and Calculator Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled soon and that a priority item is for the subcommittee to look at recommendations from the Low-Income Deviation Work Group on how we may possibly improve the ease-of-use and functionality of this deviation under the current statute.

Training

Commission Staff member Latoinna Lawrence reported on trainings by staff during the calendar year 2021. She explained that staff conducted a total of 20 training sessions, 12 of which were basic child support and calculator trainings conducted in Zoom Webinar. Other trainings were provided to Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution (GODR) registered neutrals, juvenile court judges in Hall County, superior and magistrate court judges in Cobb County, and video training for superior court judges provided during the judge's winter conference in January 2021. Staff Attorney Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez also conducted training for Georgia's Child Welfare Law Specialists at their conference in September.

Report from the Parenting Time Deviation Study Committee

Chair, Kathleen "Katie" Connell, thanked the members of the Parenting Time Deviation ("PTD") Study Committee and staff for their many efforts over the last three years on the PTD Study Committee. Chair Connell honored the contributions of Mark Rogers, a PTD Study Committee member, who sadly passed very recently. She especially noted his patience and expertise and commented that he was an instrumental part of the work of this committee. Chair Connell noted that a report from the PTD Study Committee had been circulated to all Commission members prior to the meeting and that it suggests changes to the way parenting time is handled in the calculation of child support, especially that the process for doing so be more formulaic, and as a systematic way that is more reliable to parents, with continued judicial discretion. She explained that the substantive perspective in the report can be found on pages 4 through 7, and that the first 20 pages encompasses all findings of the PTD Study Committee, as well as specific ideas, information, and procedures used in other states. Chair Connell asked that the issue of parenting time be handed off to the Commission's Statute Review Subcommittee for further consideration.

Judge Key thanked the study committee members for their work and directed staff to have the PTD Study Committee Report posted to the Commission's website. Before review and discussion by the Child Support Commission, there was no objection to sending the PTD Study Committee Report to the Statute Review Subcommittee for review and to consider whether any PTD Study Committee recommendations should be acted upon.

Commission Member, Judge Connie Williford, asked Judge Key if there would be an opportunity for Commission members to weigh in on the recommendations of the PTD Study Committee. Judge Key explained that all members will have the opportunity to provide their comments and engage in meetings, even if they are not a member of the Statute Review Subcommittee. Chair Connell asked if Judge Williford would be willing to serve as a member of the Statute Review Subcommittee, and Judge Williford replied that she would be happy to serve. Judge Key asked if there were any other Commission members who wish to serve on Statute Review, and member Christina Scott said she would like to serve. Commission Staff member Elaine Johnson reported that Legal Aid Attorney Mara Block, also asked to serve as a non-commission member of the subcommittee. Chair Connell stated that Superior Court Judge Amanda Petty is interested in serving as well, and Ms. Johnson said she would communicate with Judge Petty about serving.

Chair Connell added, for the benefit of all Commission members, that any work concluded by the Statute Review Subcommittee will be returned to the full Commission for their review and consideration.

Public Comments

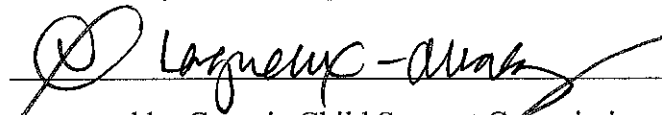
Judge Key opened the floor for public comment and three guests spoke. Among several topics, Mr. Raja Antone expressed his pleasure at seeing “traction” on the issue of parenting time and noted that fathers should also benefit tax wise from paying child support. Among other things, Mr. Gil Freeman was troubled by the PTD Study Committee, questioned the make-up of that Study Committee especially for its lack of a mental health professional and racial diversity among the membership, and suggests that if a noncustodial parent gets a second job, such second job should not be counted toward child support in the same way as his or her first job. Tracy Palma thanked the Commission for time to speak and the PTD Study Committee for its work, although she was disappointed by what she perceived as that PTD Study Committee making fun of noncustodial parents. Ms. Palma is also very concerned about the ramifications of imputing incoming when calculating child support as she finds such a practice makes noncustodial parents “immediately behind” on their child support.

Next Meeting

The next Child Support Commission meeting will be on Friday, August 19, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. at which time it is expected that Dr. Jane Venohr will present a preliminary report on the economic study. Judge Key would like for that meeting to be in person or hybrid. Justice LaGrua offered the Nathan Deal Judicial Center as a possible location for this meeting if those logistics can be worked out.

The meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Reviewed by: Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, Staff Attorney



Approved by Georgia Child Support Commission at
Commission Meeting on August 19, 2022