

**Georgia Child Support Commission
Statute Review Subcommittee
Kathleen Connell, Esq., Co-Chair
Hon. Connie Williford, Co-Chair
Friday, May 19, 2023
2:00 p.m.**

Meeting Minutes

The Statute Review Subcommittee (“Subcommittee”) of the Georgia Child Support Commission (“Commission”) held this meeting via Zoom Webinar. Nine (9) Subcommittee members attended the meeting. The Subcommittee members in attendance were:

Kathleen “Katie” Connell, Esq.	Hon. Connie Williford	Mara Block, Esq.
Pat Buonodono, Esq.	Byron Cuthbert, Esq.	Rep. Chuck Efstoration
Judge Emory Palmer	Regina Quick, 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 Child Support Commission Subcommittees joined as panelists and members of the public attended this open meeting.

Co-Chair Katie Connell started the meeting at 2:02 p.m. Latoinna Lawrence gave a brief reminder of Zoom etiquette details for this meeting along with a reminder that public comments can be made through the Commission’s website or at a full Commission meeting. Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez confirmed the quorum of Subcommittee members. Co-Chair Katie Connell noted that the minutes of the Subcommittee’s April 21, 2023, meeting were previously distributed. No edits to those minutes were requested. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Dr. Jane Venohr of the Center for Policy Research, Inc., joined this meeting to continue discussions on possible alternatives to Georgia’s low-income and parenting time deviations. Dr. Venohr provided updated memorandums on these topics with the Low-Income memo dated May 11, 2023, and the Parenting Time memo dated May 12, 2023. The updated memos have been published on the Child Support Commission website.

During the first hour of the meeting, Judge Emory Palmer led a discussion around the low-income deviation based on the aforementioned memo published here: https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2023/05/GA_low_incomememoRevisedMay11tosend.pdf, and written by Dr. Venohr entitled “Memorandum to the Georgia Child Support Guidelines Statute Review Subcommittee: Three Low-Income Subtopics.” The conversations centered on the low-income deviation approach used in several states, such as Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Nevada, Arizona, Wisconsin, and Utah. Dr. Venohr pointed out that from the federal perspective, an order is supposed to be based on a parent’s ability to pay the child support, including when a low-income deviation is used. The discussion continued on questions raised, such as on the use of a self-support reserve or a low-income table that would become part of Georgia’s BCSO table, should the low-income calculation apply to both low-income

parents, and the continued use of judicial discretion. The discussion concluded that a consensus was reached that Exhibit 16 on page 13 of the Dr. Venohr's memo was a framework reviewed in this meeting that could be used by Georgia. It was agreed that the chairs, staff, and Dr. Venohr should speak again as needed, prior to the June 23rd meeting, to work through any outstanding issues and be prepared to select our low-income option at the next meeting.

During the second hour of the meeting, Co-Chair Katie Connell and Co-Chair Judge Connie Williford led a discussion around parenting time based on the aforementioned memo published here: https://csc.georgiacourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2023/05/GA_time_sharingMay14revised.pdf, and written by Dr. Venohr entitled "Memorandum on Parenting-Time Adjustments and Addendum." Dr. Venohr began her comments by covering the Minnesota formula on pages 1 and 3 of the Addendum report dated May 12, 2023. Discussions continued on questions raised concerning cross-credit in parenting time, the use of a theoretical order for each parent in the calculation of parenting time, concerns that the subcommittee does not want a cliff effect in Georgia's parenting time formula, and thoughts on time sharing thresholds, to name a few. The subcommittee concluded that they need to determine a formula and to define overnights, and that judicial discretion must continue to apply in a new formula. Dr. Venohr asked the subcommittee if they think that it would be fair to flip which parent will owe child support when there's nearly equal incomes, or when the parent with less parenting time also has significantly less income. She added that decisions on these things will help narrow down which formula to use. Another issue is the definition of overnights, and that one other important item, which has already been decided and exists in Georgia's guidelines statute today, is the criteria that parenting time must be based on a court order. The subcommittee members agreed that they need to see more examples of parenting time calculations as demonstrated by Dr. Venohr. Four of the members, Co-Chair Williford, Co-Chair Connell, Christina Scott, and Mara Block, agreed to submit fact pattern examples that Dr. Venohr can use at the next meeting and demonstrate these additional scenarios.

Latoinna Lawrence gave a brief update on the survey results from the public survey on changing the terms "custodial parent" and "noncustodial parent" as used in Georgia's Child Support guidelines statute and in Georgia's child support calculator. As of today, the results still favor keeping the terms the same, i.e., continuing to use the terms "custodial" and "noncustodial parent." The survey may be reached through the Child Support Commission's website or on the home page of the Child Support Calculator and will remain active for a few more months.

There was no new business noted. The co-chairs reminded the subcommittee that other topics included in today's agenda will be carried forward to the next meeting agenda and will be discussed in the next meeting, as time allows.

The Subcommittee's next meeting will be held on Friday, June 23, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom Webinar. Information to join that meeting may be found on the Commission's website on the "Meeting Notices" page and via the Commission's listserv. The public is invited to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 pm