

**Georgia Child Support Commission**  
**Commission Meeting**  
**Judge R. Michael Key, Chair**  
**Friday, August 11, 2023**  
**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

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 | Chuck Clay, Esq.      | Judge Lisa Colbert  |
| Kathleen B. Connell, Esq.   | Rep. Houston Gaines   | Judge Benjamin Land |
| Judge Emory Palmer          | Sen. Brian Strickland | 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 for this meeting. Several subject matter experts on government benefit programs and members of the public also attended this open meeting, some in person and some by Zoom.

Chair Key opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m., welcoming all. Introductions were made of those attending online and in person. At the direction of Governor Brian Kemp, Chair Key administered the Oath of Office to Judge Benjamin Land of the Georgia Court of Appeals, sworn in as a new member of the Georgia Child Support Commission. Judge Land replaces Supreme Court Justice Shawn LaGrua. Staff member, Latoinna Lawrence, reviewed procedures for efficient handling of this hybrid meeting.

Chair Key announced that as Chair, he exercised his discretion and asked Commission member, Judge Connie Williford, to serve as Vice-Chair of the Commission and she has agreed to serve in that capacity. Chair Key stated that her appointment as Vice-Chair does not mean that he is leaving the Commission, unless the governor tells him to. He thanked Judge Williford, stating he knows how busy she is and appreciates her making room for us.

Chair Key noted a quorum of the members was in attendance and that the minutes from the May 2, 2023, Commission meeting had been previously distributed to all members. Chair Key asked if there were any additions or corrections needed to those minutes and with none identified, the members voted unanimously to approve those minutes. Chair Key moved then to the business of the Commission with reports from the chairs of the Economic, Statute Review, and Technology and Calculator Subcommittees.

Chair Key called upon Dr. Roger Tutterow to report on the work of the Economic Subcommittee. Dr. Roger Tutterow, who serves as Chair of that Subcommittee, reported on the

work of the Economic Subcommittee. He began by pointing out the two responsibilities of the Subcommittee are to review and select a table for consideration by the Commission and to oversee the selection of a sample for analysis in the economic study, pursuant to federal requirements. He shared that the Subcommittee began its work in 2021, considered the tables that were based upon analysis in 2006, and recognizing how the world has changed in those ensuing times to have Dr. Jane Venohr estimate the tables for us. She provided that analysis to us in August 2022. The Subcommittee is asking the Commission to accept the recommended Basic Child Support Obligation Table (“BCSO Table”) and to present that table to the Georgia General Assembly in a bill during the 2024 legislative session. Specifically, the Economic Subcommittee asked the Commission to recommend that the Georgia General Assembly adopt the “A.1: Updated Using Rothbarth” BCSO Table developed by Dr. Jane Venohr dated August 8, 2022. That proposed BCSO Table employs the Rothbarth methodology, which is the most commonly used methodology in the United States (as of August 2022, 32 states employ the Rothbarth methodology). That proposed BCSO Table will also calculate BCSO amounts for parents with a combined gross income of up to \$40,000 monthly, up from the previous amount of \$30,000. Chuck Clay moved to approve the Economic Subcommittee’s recommendation to increase the BCSO Table to \$40,000 as discussed above. That motion was seconded by Judge Emory Palmer and passed unanimously with no abstentions. Member Chuck Clay made a motion that the Commission accept the recommended table, and member Judge Ben Land made a second to the motion. The members voted unanimously to approve the recommended table.

Chair Key called upon Co-Chair Connie Williford to report on the work of the Statute Review Subcommittee. Co-Chair Williford reported that the subcommittee continues to work with Dr. Jane Venohr with the Center for Policy Research, Inc., exploring solutions for the low income and parenting time deviations. She shared that the Subcommittee is making good progress on identifying possible alternatives to those two deviations. The Subcommittee anticipates making recommendations to the full Commission on those topics at the next full Commission meeting on November 17, 2023. She shared that the next two meetings of the Subcommittee are set for August 18 and September 21. Co-Chair Katie Connell had no additional information to report for the Subcommittee. Chair Key asked Judge Palmer if he had anything to report on behalf of the Low-Income Study Committee. Judge Palmer echoed what had been stated and added that we’re approaching the point where we will have something concrete to report.

Chair Key called on a report from the Technology and Calculator Subcommittee. Staff member, Elaine Johnson spoke briefly on the Technology and Calculator Subcommittee. She shared that Chair Regina Quick had an unavoidable conflict and could not attend today’s meeting and asked her to report on her behalf. Ms. Johnson shared that the calculator continues to run very smoothly, and that the AOC’s IT department continues to monitor the calculator very carefully for security issues. Staff also continues to consider ways to improve and simplify the use of the Child Support Calculator.

Chair Key thanked the chairs, members of the Subcommittees, and study committee members for their diligent efforts and hard work. Chair Key led a discussion on proposing legislation for the Commission during the 2024 legislative session. He noted that, at a minimum, legislation will be needed to propose the adoption of the updated BCSO Table and potentially for other issues such as changes to the parenting time and low-income deviations. Chair Key asked

for a motion to request that the Commission's legislative members authorize Legislative Counsel, Holly Carter, to draft the Commission's proposed legislation for the 2024 legislative session. Chuck Clay so moved, Roger Tutterow seconded that motion and it passed unanimously with no abstentions. Chair Key asked one of the Commission's legislative members to authorize the Commission's legislative counsel to begin drafting a bill for the Commission. Senator Brian Strickland volunteered to authorize Holly Carter, Legislative Counsel assigned to the Commission, to work with the Commission and draft proposed legislation for the 2024 legislative session.

Chair Key called upon staff to introduce and guide us through discussions on HB 499. Staff Attorney, Noelle Lagueur-Alvarez, began by sharing that the Commission will hear from several subject matter experts and other guests on HB 499. She explained that the bill was introduced during the 2023 legislative session and offered a brief background of that bill noting that it proposed to extend the duration of child support beyond the age of majority if a child were deemed disabled. Ms. Lagueur-Alvarez also noted that Commission staff had been contacted by Legal Aid attorneys expressing grave concerns about HB-499, especially on low-income families, and that staff felt duty-bound to raise those concerns to the Commission. Staff member, Elaine Johnson, continued the discussion noting that, as a result of inquiries to the Commission, staff began to explore potential impacts of HB 499 and collaborated with DCSS to identify subject matter experts on that topic. Representatives from the Social Security Administration, Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF all spoke on the potential impact child support payments, or support payments, could have on eligibility for those respective programs. Staff also invited the five members of the Georgia House of Representatives who sponsored the bill to attend this Commission meeting. Those members are Rep Hitchens of the 161<sup>st</sup>, Dempsey of the 13<sup>th</sup>, Smith of the 70<sup>th</sup>, Stephens of the 164<sup>th</sup>, and Ballinger of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Commission heard from the following subject matter experts on the financial impact the bill could have on the eligibility budgets associated with public benefits, state and federal.

Social Security Administration (SSA), Ms. Alicia Lipscomb;  
Georgia's Medicaid Program, Mr. Bradly Green;  
Georgia's SNAP (food stamp) Program, Ms. Pamela Mack; and  
Georgia's TANF Program, Ms. Melinda Mewbourn.

The conclusions drawn from their detailed reports were that the eligibility budgets that are associated with the applications for the first three of these state and federal benefits, Social Security, Medicaid, and SNAP, could be significantly impacted by a reduction of benefits based on the inclusion of support paid by a parent after the child reaches age of majority in Georgia. There is no impact to TANF unless the now adult disabled child has a child of their own and applies for and is approved for TANF.

A former Legal Aid attorney, Ms. Mara Block, and current family law practitioner also spoke on possible negative financial impacts of HB 499 to low-income families in Georgia.

The Commission heard extensive comments on HB 499 from Mrs. Jill Sapp, a concerned parent. She partnered with Rep. Bill Hitchens, who is one of the sponsors of the bill, to initiate the bill. The Commission also heard from Rep. Hitchens on the need for further discussions to see if we can come up with an equitable solution. Chair Key remarked that this subject is much larger

than anticipated and is clearly a public policy decision not to be made by the Commission, but if made by the legislature, we stand ready to play our part in helping carry that out if the legislature makes that public policy decision.

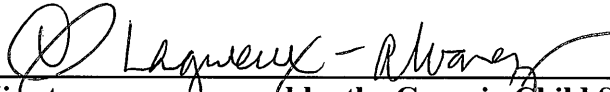
The topic prompted public comment from some attendees.

Chair Key opened a public comment period, for topics other than HB 499, allowing each speaker 3 minutes to address any of their concerns. Members of the public spoke, in person and via Zoom, on different topics and offered their various opinions. At the conclusion of the comments, Chair Key thanked those who spoke. He also reminded those persons making comments that the Commission deals with policy and law, not individual cases. He noted that a lot of what we heard today seems to relate to practices done in the courts themselves.

The next Commission meeting will be a hybrid meeting that will take place on November 17, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center in Atlanta and via Zoom.

This meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

**Reviewed by: Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, Staff Attorney**



**Minutes were approved by the Georgia Child Support  
Commission during a scheduled meeting on 11/17/2023**