

Ohio Commission on Fatherhood

Minutes from the Meeting of

Thursday, November 4, 2010

<p>Commissioners Present:</p> <p>Peter Lawson Jones, Chairman</p> <p>Senator Ray Miller</p> <p>Representative Carlton Weddington</p> <p>Mr. Robert Boykins</p> <p>Mr. Bo Chilton</p> <p>Mr. Cedric Collins</p> <p>Ms. Kimberly Dent</p> <p>Director Greg Hargett</p> <p>Mr. Thomas Eddie Joyce</p> <p>Dr. Diane Karther</p> <p>Mr. Steven Killpack</p> <p>Ms. Jewel Smith</p> <hr/> <p>Commissioners Represented by Designee:</p> <p>Mr. Scott Neely (by Rona Dorsey)</p> <hr/> <p>OCF Staff:</p> <p>Mr. J. Tracy Robinson, Executive Director</p> <p>Ms. Monica Mahoney</p> <p>Ms. Whitney Logan</p>	<p>Guests:</p> <p>Dr. Alvin Jackson Director Ohio Department of Health</p> <p>Sandra Holt Deputy Director Office of Families and Children Ohio Department of Job and Family Services</p> <p>David Fleischman Bureau Chief Office of Child Support</p> <p>Chip Weiant Advisory Board Member Governor's Office of Faith Based & Community Initiatives</p> <p>Benjamin Anderson Policy Analyst Office of Child Support</p> <p>Lakeisha Hilton Policy Analyst Ohio Department of Job and Family Services</p> <p>Edward Stockhausen Legislative Aide for Senator Shirley Smith Ohio Senate</p> <p>Lavita Stokes Vice President Three Leaf Productions</p> <p>Dr. Wilburn Weddington, MD</p>
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I. Call to Order & Welcome

Executive Director Tracy Robinson called the meeting to order at 11:15 am. Chairman Peter Lawson Jones arrived shortly thereafter and a quorum was achieved. Chairman Jones introduced himself and welcomed our guests to the meeting.

II. Recognition of Commissioners' Service

Chairman Jones and Director Robinson recognized the following commissioners whose terms as commissioners on the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood (OCF) were ending: Senator Ray Miller, Senator David Goodman, Representative Marian Harris, and Joseph Maiorano. Senator Miller was commended for his work to strengthen responsible fatherhood and presented with a certificate and book in gratitude for his service to the commission.

III. Approval of September 2, 2010 Minutes

Senator Miller moved, with Representative Carlton Weddington seconding, that the minutes from the meeting of September 2, 2010, be approved as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Executive Director's Report

Director Robinson provided a written summary of his activities in September and October, a synopsis of which has been incorporated in these minutes. Director Robinson highlighted his involvement in the following events and activities:

- On September 15, Director Robinson briefed members of the Ohio Congressional Delegation in Washington, DC. and hand-delivered letters from the OCF encouraging Representatives to

support H.R. 2979: Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009 and S.B.1309: Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009.

- On September 20, Director Robinson briefed Executive Director of the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, Monica Gillison, on the purpose of the OCF and discussed possible future collaborations.
- On October 7, Director Robinson conducted a workshop on how to engage fathers at the Public Children Services Association of Ohio Conference in Columbus, Ohio.
- On October 16, Director Robinson served as the keynote speaker at The Holy Day of Atonement Church in Lorain, Ohio.
- On October 29, Director Robinson and Monica Mahoney served as panelists at the Columbus Urban League's Third Annual Celebration of Fatherhood in Columbus, Ohio.
- On November 1, Director Robinson served as the keynote speaker at WSOS's Fatherhood Summit in Fremont, Ohio.

V. Legislation & Policy

A. Senate Bill 292

Edward Stockhausen, Legislative Aide for Ohio Senator Shirley Smith, briefed the Commission on Senate Bill (S.B.) 292. Senator Smith is the sponsor of S.B. 292 which seeks comprehensive reform of Ohio's Child Support Laws which have not been updated in eighteen years. The bills is based on the recommendations of the 2009 Ohio Child Support Guidelines Advisory Council (the Council) and was drafted in consultation and with the support of the Ohio Office of Child Support and the Ohio Child Support Directors Association. Commissioner Steve Killpack, David Fleishman, Ben Anderson and Lakeisha Hilton all worked on the Council and provided additional comments and clarification of points

made by Mr. Sockhausen. In addition, the OCF Legislative Subcommittee considered the bill and provided the Commission with a one page summary of the key provisions of S.B. 292.

Parenting Time Adjustment

The current model for child support assumes that the custodial parent bears all of the costs for raising a child. This assumption does not account for any expenses the non-custodial parent may incur when spending court-ordered Parenting Time with the child. To remedy this, S.B. 292 applies a two-pronged approach in which parents with standard court-ordered Parenting Time orders receive an 8.75% decrease in the support order. When Parenting Time exceeds 40%, the child support obligation is adjusted using a calculation developed by the Council. If a parent questions the calculation, he or she may ask the court for a deviation based on other facts and circumstances.

Medical Support

Current Child Support worksheets make it difficult for parents to know how changes in their children's health insurance coverage affect child support orders. Moreover, recent changes in Ohio law have created inconsistencies and complications statewide. S.B. 292 corrects these problems by simplifying the "cash medical" calculation in the new worksheets.

Self Support Reserve

To prevent parents from falling below the federal poverty level, S.B. 292 creates a new two-prong test to determine the parent's ability to meet the child support obligation while also maintaining a modicum of self-support.

Increase the Minimum Support Order

The minimum child support order has remained unchanged for 18 years, despite inflation and other cost-of-living increases. S.B. 292 increases the minimum order from \$50 to \$80/month (\$960/year).

Discussion of S.B. 292

A lengthy discussion among the commissioners ensued. Dr. Alvin Jackson stressed that in order for the bill to gain bi-partisan support, Senator Smith's office must be able to present figures showing the financial impact of the bill on state revenue. Representative Weddington agreed and further stated that because of the anticipated state budget deficit, all bills would have to show a positive fiscal impact in order to have any hope for passage during the next General Assembly. Chairman Jones asked whether any legislators on the Council co-authored or co-sponsored the bill. Mr. Stockhausen replied that no legislators from the Council are co-sponsors; currently, Senator Bill Sykes is the sole co-sponsor. Commissioner Killpack stated that several fathers' rights groups oppose any increase in child support and they need to be educated about the positive provisions contained in the bill. The Commission voted not to endorse the bill at this time. Director Robinson offered to offer proponent testimony about the provisions that encourage a father's financial investment in his child if additional hearings are held or the bill is reintroduced.

B. House Bill 349 Update

Chairman Jones briefed the Commission on the status of HB 349 since the last Commission meeting. The bill has remained on the Senate calendar without further action since May 19, 2010. It is unclear whether the Senate will meet again before the end of the year. Chairman Jones asked Representative Weddington and Senator Miller what additional actions could be taken. Senator Miller volunteered to speak with Senate President Bill Harris and will ask Senator Smith to reach out as well.

C. Federal Grant for Asset Building for Financial Responsibility

Commissioner Kimberly Dent informed the Commission that a successful federal grant for Asset Building for Financial Responsibility Grant for \$650,000. The grant proposes a statewide approach connecting low income non-custodial fathers to financial education and asset building programs.

Partners include the Ohio Office of Child Support, the Ohio Community Development Corporation and the Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families. Commissioner Killpack and Monica Mahoney assisted in drafting the successful grant proposal. The grant includes two-pronged statewide and local approach that will improve the financial well-being of children across Ohio with a particular focus on families living in urban poverty.

Low income non-custodial fathers in Ohio often struggle to maintain stable employment, pay their child support, and stay actively involved in the lives of their children. These fathers typically tend to be wary of traditional financial systems and government agencies. Fatherhood providers who have established trusting relationships with non-custodial fathers will be key to overcoming distrust of Child Support agencies. The initiative will be promoted through print and web-based media as well as innovative new media such as social networking platforms, text messaging and mobile web applications.

VI. Meeting Calendar

Ms. Mahoney presented the commission meeting dates for 2011. The meetings will continue to take place on Thursdays in the Lazarus Building but the time of the meetings will change to 10:00am-12:00pm instead of 11:00am-1:00pm.

VII. Announcements & New Business

Ms. Lavita Stokes spoke about her autobiography, A Father's Love in which she writes about her experience growing up without a father.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.