

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN
<http://www.nh.gov/csm>
Minutes for the Twenty-Fifth Commission Meeting
March 31, 2006 1-4 PM
Legislative Office Building Room 206, Concord, NH

These minutes were taken by Scott Garman.

Members Present: Joe Mastromarino, Gus Lerandean, Scott Garman, Michael Geanoulis.

Also Present: John Stephen, John Williams, Maggie Bishop, Grace Mattern, David Bickford, Lee Newman.

Members Absent: Marshall Hickok, David Lauren.

Joe Mastromarino called the meeting to order and introduced the guest speaker, Commissioner John Stephen from the NH Department of Health and Human Services.

DHHS Commissioner John Stephen Testimony:

A complete transcript of Commissioner Stephen's testimony is being made available in a separate document.

Secretary's Report:

Scott Garman presented the draft of the February 2006 meeting minutes. Scott noted that he had received an e-mail from Marshall Hickok before the meeting stating that Marshall asks that we "remove, rather than repeat, the language that was voted to be stricken and replaced" in the January 2006 minutes. This was discussed, but since there was no reason given for this change, and some members felt that failing to mention the replaced text was not appropriate given the open nature of our meetings, the amendment was decided against. Some concerns about the Right to Know laws were also raised. Gus Lerandean motioned to table approval of the minutes, but it was not seconded.

Michael Geanoulis motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Scott Garman seconded, and the motion passed 3 to 1, with Gus Lerandean opposed and Stephen Gorin abstaining.

Web Site Report:

Scott Garman reported that last month he added a link to the Newsweek article "The Trouble with Boys" that Marshall Hickok had provided to the Resources page of the CSM web site.

Legislative Report:

Rep. David Bickford was invited to speak on the subject of relevant legislative items. He reports that HB529 is expected to be voted upon soon by the Senate Judiciary Committee, and would create a

presumption of comparable parenting time. HB1580, which would change the current child support guidelines to allow child support amounts to be based on both parent's incomes and the amount of time that the child spends with each parent. This bill is currently in the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

Teen Dating Violence:

Lee Newman from SAFE-NH was invited to speak with the Commission. Lee distributed an article on teen dating violence to the Commissioners (Sex Survey 'Eye-Opening' For Local Parents, by Marilyn Brown. The Tampa Tribune, December 11, 2005). The article discussed a school district-wide survey that found more male high school students (16%) than female (11.8%) reported being physically hurt by their significant others. It also found that 9% of male and almost 12% of female high school students reported that they had been physically forced to have sex. SAFE-NH has prepared a Teen Dating Violence flyer to raise awareness with NH parents and outline warning signs to look for.

David Lauren's Letter:

Joe Mastromarino noted that David Lauren had submitted a letter that he wished to have entered into the meeting minutes on the subject of the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. The letter is included below:

*David Lauren
Attorney at Law
1-28 Skyline Drive
Amherst, NH 03031
603-249-8910 (voice & fax)
dlau@adelphia.net*

*March 28, 2006
Dr. Joseph Mastromarino
Chair – NH Commission on the Status of Men
Concord, NH*

VIA E-MAIL

Dear Joe:

Thank you for your e-mail alerting me to the fact that John Stephen will be meeting with the Commission on the Status of Men this Friday, March 31. As you know, I have to be in Los Angeles on business and will be unable to attend the meeting.

I am sending this letter to you with the intent that it be read into and reflected in the minutes of the meeting. Your e-mail indicated that “[w]e do need to talk about how DHHS chooses the 'vendor' (sic) to distribute domestic violence funds in the state.” As I can't be at the meeting, I want to go on record regarding my views on this topic.

I believe that the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence is the recipient of

those funds, and is the entity that makes decisions on how the funds are distributed. As a former prosecutor and attorney in private practice, I have worked with the Coalition many times, and want to go on record as stating that I believe that they perform their job with the utmost professionalism and concern for the victim. I have always found them willing to listen to all points of view, and they approach their job with a passion tempered with reasoned analysis, rather than simply on emotion.

If the Commission takes any vote to recommend that the Department of Health and Human Services choose a different "vendor" I want it clearly reflected in the minutes that I do not support that vote. If the Commission has any disagreement with the Coalition, my suggestion is that we set up a meeting and sit down with them and discuss the differences in a collegial, reasoned manner. I would be happy to be involved in any such meeting should the Commission feel it is appropriate.

Thank you for your understanding of my absence, and your willingness to enter this letter into the minutes of the meeting.

*Sincerely,
David
David Lauren
Attorney at Law*

Birth Certificate Laws:

Mike Geanoulis suggested that everyone study the birth certificate laws under RSA 5-C to determine the extent to which this Commission might want to recommend changes for the purpose of pursuing our duty to "bring fathers and children closer together." Under present law, it is possible for the father to be left unnamed on the child's birth certificate.