

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN**  
MINUTES FOR THE SEVENTEENTH COMMISSION MEETING  
April 27, 2005 1-4 PM  
Legislative Office Building Room 206, Concord

**Members Present:** Joe Mastromarino, Scott Garman, Michael Geanoulis, Stephen Gorin, Marshall Hickok, Gus Lerandeau.

**Members Absent:** Larry Colby

Others Present: Rep. David Bickford, Maurice Chaput, Paul Clements, Lee Newman.

These minutes were taken by Scott Garman.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes from the February meeting, taken by Larry Colby, were amended by Mike Geanoulis. Joe Mastromarino motioned to approve the minutes as amended, which was seconded by Mike Geanoulis and unanimously approved. The minutes from the March meeting, taken by Scott Garman, were amended by Stephen Gorin and Mike Geanoulis. Mike Geanoulis motioned to approve the minutes as amended, which was seconded by Scott Garman and unanimously approved.

The CSM web site will be updated to include notes that official minutes from the October, November, December, and January meetings are not available due to the fact that either a meeting was not held (December, January) or that a quorum of members was not present so no official business was done (October, November).

**Treasurer's Report:** Larry Colby, Treasurer, was not present at this meeting and his report is deferred until the next meeting.

**Meeting Organization:**

Gus Lerandeau and Marshall Hickok both expressed concerns that a more formal organization of the CSM meetings was necessary, with clearer separation between official business by Commissioners vs. input from the public.

Marshall Hickok suggested that we investigate obtaining an area in the Secretary of State's Office where printed meeting minutes could be stored in a binder or file cabinet. Joe Mastromarino noted that previous inquiries were made about obtaining office space for the Commission and it was declined. Rep. David Bickford noted that to comply with the Right to Know law, posting the meeting minutes on the state web site was sufficient, but he agreed that the CSM should be able to obtain at least some space on a shelf or in a filing cabinet to store meeting minutes in.

Marshall Hickok agreed to get in touch with the Attorney General's office to obtain clearer guidelines about how state commission meetings should be run to comply with RTK and other pertinent regulations (see motion recorded below).

#### **Commission Communications:**

Mike Geanoulis reported that he received applications from Jeff Oigny and Paul Clements to serve on the CSM advisory groups whose creation was approved during the February and March meetings.

Gus Lerandau made a three-part motion: 1. to table advisory groups while a Commissioner researches the legality of creating advisory groups, 2. to find out where Commission meeting minutes and research could be physically stored for public access, and 3. to ask pertinent questions about the operation of the CSM with the Attorney General's office and Secretary of State's office. Joe Mastromarino and Marshall Hickok volunteered to do this research. Steve Gorin seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **Web Site:**

Scott Garman reported that a link to the RADAR project (Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting) was added to the Resources web page as per agreement during the March meeting.

#### **Legislation:**

Rep. David Bickford gave an overview of recent legislative activity that may be of interest to the Commission. HB529, establishing a rebuttable presumption in favor of shared parental rights and responsibilities, has been retained for further study by the House Child and Family Law Committee and probably won't be acted upon until late this fall (November).

HB640, relative to parental rights and responsibilities, is in the process of being reviewed by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Through public testimony, they have been asked to amend the bill with two sentences to make it similar to HB529. A vote is likely by next week.

HB 450, extending the Child Support Study Commission and appropriating funds for an economic study of the costs of raising children in NH, received a lot of positive testimony in its public hearing. More than ten people testified in favor of it, including members of the Dept. of Health and Human Services.

#### **Spring Domestic Violence Conference:**

Mike Geanoulis expressed that he would like to attend the 11th Annual Conference on Domestic

Violence, held at the Mount Washington Hotel on June 9-11 this year, but needs financial sponsorship from the CSM.

Mike Geanoulis made a motion that the CSM pay the conference registration fee for two individuals, Mike Geanoulis and Lee Newman, to attend it on behalf of the CSM and to report their findings. Scott Garman seconded the motion. However, Marshall Hickok, Gus Lerandean, and Stephen Gorin raised concerns that the CSM might not be authorized to send non-Commissioners on behalf of the CSM to the event and that the money might be better spent on other projects. Mike Geanoulis then withdrew his motion.

### **Domestic Violence Letter:**

Mike Geanoulis presented his proposed draft letter to the Governor's Committee on Domestic and Sexual Violence (GCDSV). The letter asked the GCDSV to include statistics about male victims of domestic violence so as to improve the balance of information in their reports. This missing data could play a critical role in understanding the problem of domestic violence and the formulation of policies aimed to prevent domestic violence fatalities.

Mike Geanoulis read a quote from Murray Straus' book, Behind Closed Doors which mentioned statistics that both men and women perpetrate domestic assaults and nearly equal rates.

Rep. David Bickford noted that someone from the Administrative Office is interested in doing reports on DV and wants input from the public about what kinds of statistics are desired.

Marshall Hickok expressed concerns that writing letters holding other state Commissions to be in error with their alleged facts was unproductive and that the CSM should focus on gathering data of its own instead. Mike Geanoulis then made a motion to table the effort to communicate with the Governor's Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence. Steve Gorin seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Men's Health Issues/NH Suicide Study:**

Joe Mastromarino stated that he plans to get in touch with the Men's Health Network to find out about current projects on men's health that the Commission could become involved with. The NH suicide study is currently making slow progress because Joe is in need of someone with some statistical analysis skills (specifically with Microsoft Access) to help analyze the data that has been collected so far. He would welcome any offers of help with this from the public.

### **UNH Male Bashing Concerns Letter:**

Scott Garman presented a letter he proposed to send to UNH administration regarding the status of male students. The letter covered three general areas: 1. The problem of declining male enrollment at UNH (currently down to 40% of the undergraduate student body and decreasing) 2.

The fact that events such as the Patriarchy Slam event held at UNH which promoted radical anti-male sentiments is likely a contributing factor to these declining male enrollments. 3. That the CSM would like to know what UNH is doing to help improve the status of men at its institution and what assistance the Commission could offer.

Marshall Hickok objected to the letter on grounds that the Feminist Action League was engaged in free speech and that, like Mike Geanoulis' proposed letter on domestic violence, the Commission should focus on fact gathering (in particular researching why male enrollment is declining at colleges and Universities) rather than writing letters of protest on individual issues.

Scott Garman stated that he still felt it was important to send this letter, and that, as a UNH alumni, he sympathized with the worsening treatment of men on campus there. Furthermore, he stated that the letter was carefully drafted so as to focus primarily on the overall status of men at UNH, rather than address the Patriarchy Slam as the sole issue of concern. Scott then made a motion for the Commission to approve the letter to be sent to UNH. Mike Geanoulis seconded, and the motion failed 2-3 (Garman and Geanoulis yea, Gorin, Hickok, and Lerandeau nay).

#### **Display of Literature in NH Courthouses:**

Mike Geanoulis presented communications he had with Jeff Oligny of East Hampstead. Mr. Oligny submitted a request to place brochures about the NH Chapter of the National Congress for Fathers and Children (NCFC-NH) in state courthouses, and his request was denied. An Administrative Order (2005-05), for posting notices in New Hampshire courthouses was recently issued by NH Supreme Court Clerk Eileen Fox in response to Mr. Oligny's request. The order was dated April 8, 2005, approximately the same time Mr. Oligny made his request. Mr. Oligny and Mike Geanoulis feel that this denial was unjust, as the NCFC-NH brochures meet even the requirements set by the new Administrative Order. Mr. Oligny noted that there is no shortage of women's brochures in the courthouses, while little to nothing for men exists there.

Mike Geanoulis moved to table the problem of the brochure's placement until the results of Lee Newman's effort to place SAFE-NH literature in state courthouses are received.

As official business came to a close at the meeting, the Commissioners present agreed to bring a specific objective they would like to have the Commission address to the next meeting.

#### **Public Testimony:**

Paul Clements testified before the Commission. Mr. Clements believes that the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee should be petitioned to include more balanced information and that their reports are inaccurate and misleading due to the omission of information about male victims. Mr. Clements felt that the purpose of Mike Geanoulis's letter was not to attack the domestic violence committee, but to object to the inaccurate data that is being used to formulate policies which harm the status of men. He recommended a book titled Domestic Violence: The

12 Things You Aren't Supposed to Know, by Thomas B. James, which exposes a lot of misinformation that is routinely accepted as fact by the media, government, the criminal justice system, and society at large.

Mr. Clements also mentioned that Katherine MacKinnon, a law professor at Michigan State University, recently gave a controversial speech at Stanford University which was a tirade of anti-male sentiment. Mr. Clements wrote to the Stanford student newspaper in response to this speech and his letter was accepted for printing.

Mr. Clements also mentioned that he is on a recently formed NH Citizens' Commission on the State Courts, one of 103 members, and would be glad to report on happenings there related to the status of men in the court system, particularly family courts.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.