

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN

<http://www.nh.gov/csm>
Official Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2008 1:00-3:30 PM
Legislative Office Building, Concord, NH

These minutes were taken by Scott Garman.

Members Present: Joe Mastromarino, Larry Colby, Scott Garman, Mike Geanoulis, Scott Meyer.

Members Absent: Marshall Hickok, David Lauren.

The meeting opened with Commissioner introductions.

The following agenda items were added without any objections:

- The Commission application of Lewie Bosler
- Kathleen Parker Article: Correcting Domestic Violence Myths
- Meeting agenda policies

Secretary's Report:

Scott Garman distributed draft copies of the June 2008 meeting minutes for approval. Larry Colby suggested that the series of journal abstracts on phthalates be converted to an appendix. Larry Colby motioned to accept the minutes as modified. Mike Geanoulis seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Web Site Update:

Scott Garman noted that the Commission's web site was brought up to date with previously approved meeting minutes and additional links in the Resources section of the site.

Larry Colby suggested that a statement be added to the website to notify the public that the Commission has available seats and instructions on how to apply for these seats. He agreed to draft a short paragraph for approval during the August meeting.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer's report is deferred due to the absence of Treasurer David Lauren. Joe Mastromarino noted that he was unable to get in touch with Barry Bodell to request a monthly balance status of the Commission's treasury account, and that he would do so before the August meeting.

Mike Geanoulis suggested that a standardized thank-you letter be developed to be sent in response to any donations the Commission receives. Scott Meyer offered to draft this letter for approval during the August meeting.

Guest Speaker: Grace Mattern, NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

The attendance of Grace Mattern was deferred at the last minute to a future meeting.

Paternity Fraud:

Mike Geanoulis expressed the need for NH legislation that would offer redress to NH victims of paternity fraud, as defined at <http://www.paternityfraud.com>. Mike Geanoulis offered to contact Carnell Smith - a national expert on the subject of paternity fraud - and discuss the possibility of a conference call with the Commission.

Other Agenda Items Brought Forward at Start of Meeting:**The Commission application of Lewie Bosler:**

Larry Colby shared the resume of Lewis Bosler, who was recently denied consideration for a seat on the Commission. Members discussed the issue of reaching full membership on the Commission and ways members might encourage the Governor and Executive Council to accelerate the seating of Commissioners. Also discussed was the feasibility of finding out what criteria are used to accept or reject parties who seek a seat on the Commission.

Kathleen Parker Article:

Mike Geanoulis distributed copies of a recent editorial by syndicated columnist Kathleen Parker (Correcting Domestic Violence Myths, 6/27/2008, NH Union Leader). Parker cited a recent book by Linda Mills, *Violent Partners*, which highlights research demonstrating that women as well as men initiate domestic violence. Mills also describes how the current "arrest-and-punish" system is not an adequate solution for many families and doesn't address the underlying causes of violence in relationships. Finally, Mills explores the roots of family violence as a "cyclical, intergenerational family problem" due to the fact that "children raised by violence are more likely to become violent or be the victim of violence in their own adult relationships." Mike encouraged Commission members to read Mills' book to gain greater understanding of domestic violence.

Meeting Agenda Policies:

Commission members discussed the unilateral cancellation by one individual member of the long-awaited appearance by Grace Mattern, Director of the NH Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Violence. It was decided that in the future no one member of the Commission will change any agenda item without consultation with the Chair and at least one other member.

Miscellaneous:

Larry Colby is in the process of designing an informational poster concept for the Commission.

The status of David Lauren's effort to compile a list of NH attorneys willing to do pro-bono work on behalf of fathers is deferred due to his absence to a future meeting.

Scott Garman has a possible contact with the Psychology Department at the University of New Hampshire and will pursue this contact for potential NHCSM internship leads.

Joe Mastromarino is still awaiting confirmation from Lee Newman that he has received the \$50 payment for his brochure/flyer designs.

Mike Geanoulis is in the process of researching whether Take Your Child to Work Day is an officially recognized day in NH.

Appendix A: Letter to DHHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas

Re: National Fatherhood Initiative Report - The Costs of Father Absence

July 10, 2008

Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas
NH DHHS Commissioners Office
129 Pleasant St
Concord, NH 03301-3857

Dear Commissioner Toumpas:

I am writing in follow-up to our letters to you of June in which we requested data about the costs of fatherless families to the state of New Hampshire and a permanent liaison to the Commission on the Status of Men to address these and other issues. We continue to look for a response from you about the various issues raised. Since that correspondence, The National Fatherhood Initiative has fortuitously published an authoritative article entitled "The Costs of Father Absence" which provides both focus and a framework for you to get this data for us, in keeping with our legislative mandate. I have enclosed a copy of the report for your reference. This report categorizes the expenditures using fourteen major government programs (Figure 3 on Page 10). We ask that you provide the New Hampshire data for these same fourteen programs. Gathering and presenting the information using this outline will both substantially decrease the effort to assemble this data and will increase its relevance by comparison with national figures.

This enclosed report conservatively estimates that the national costs of father absence (for only the fourteen government programs addressed) at almost \$100 Billion dollars. A careful reading of this rather brief report and reviewing the federal data referenced as the basis of their conclusions makes it clear that the costs are almost certainly underestimated

I am sure that you find this report to be enormously helpful, and elucidation of the New Hampshire data and subsequent legislative response to address the issues may have immense potential impact on the New Hampshire budget process. It is very possible that the savings from implementing only a few changes will yield savings to the state on the order of the yearly budget deficit.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph H. Mastromarino, MD, Chair
NH Commission on the Status of Men

cc: Hon. Gov. John Lynch,
Members of Executive Council
with enclosure