

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN

<http://www.nh.gov/csm>
Official Meeting Minutes
August 29, 2008 1:00-3:30 PM
Legislative Office Building Room 208, Concord, NH

These minutes were taken by Scott Garman.

Members Present: Joe Mastromarino, Scott Garman, Mike Geanoulis, David Lauren, Scott Meyer.

Members Absent: Larry Colby, Robert Sinclair.

Also Present: Dr. Malcom Smith, Dr. Michael Kalinowski, David Bickford, Jeff Oligny, Dr. Stevan Gressitt, Jeff Howell.

The meeting opened with Commissioner introductions.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Malcom Smith - UNH Cooperative Extension

The Commission was given an audience to Dr. Malcolm Smith and Dr. Michael Kalinowski from the UNH Cooperative Extension on Family Policy, who entered into a contract with NH Child Support Services to examine the efficacy of the NH child support guidelines. Such studies are required by federal law every 4 years.

Commission members pointed out that not one of the 17 recommendations from the last such study, "Final Report of the Commission to Study Child Support and Related Child Custody Issues (2004)" were ever acted upon, and that any further UNH report ought to emphasize this fact, to bring each of those 17 recommendations forward, and to recommend that they be acted upon without further delay. The 2004 report can be obtained from:

<http://www.cbelow.org/Child%20Support%20Commission%20Final%20Report%2012-1-04.pdf>

The 2004 study represented the work of 14 individuals who were stakeholders from many different angles who worked long and hard to come up with a fair and balanced report. Lack of action on their recommendations for over 4 years seems unfair to obligors who feel they are being treated unjustly.

The Boston Office at US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) ACF is pressuring the NH DHHS to comply with 42 U.S.C 667 and 45 CFR 302.56, as it has received public complaints of the 19-year violation thereof and requests to sanction the state of some ~\$20M in annual Title IV-D funds.

Commissioner Geanoulis emphasized the need to give parental involvement more consideration in both the guidelines and policy because of the difference in compliance rates for involved parents. Research from the University of Arizona found that parents who maintain a meaningful relationship with their children comply at rates greater than 90% (S. Braver) while disenfranchised parents seem to comply at rates hovering around 63% - a statistic that remains stable over time (see OCSE forms 167 for years 1992-2005).

Comm. Geanoulis also claimed that many feel that alimony is improperly provided for in the guidelines under the guise of child support, and that child support guidelines ought to be about child costs only - with a separate clause for alimony only where appropriate.

A link to the audio file of the session will be provided at the CSM website at a later time.

Secretary's Report:

Scott Garman distributed copies of the July 2008 meeting minutes for review. Scott Meyer motioned to accept the minutes as presented, Scott Garman seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved (David Lauren abstained due to his absence during the July meeting).

Web Site Update:

Scott Garman distributed copies of a draft version of the Commission's web site front page created by Comm. Larry Colby. David Lauren suggested a minor wording change. Scott Garman motioned to accept the draft as modified. Mike Geanoulis seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report:

David Lauren reported that he has been unable to get in touch Barry Bodell to determine the current status of the Commission's treasury. David agreed to get in touch with Mr. Bodell and obtain his email contact information as soon as possible.

Jeff Oligny - Billboard Proposal:

Jeff Oligny from East Hampstead, NH spoke to the Commission about an effort he is working on a project to rent one or more billboards and post a message about the importance of fathers. Mr. Oligny is the Public Policy director of the National Congress for Fathers and Children, NH chapter. The Commission discussed with Mr. Oligny possible alternative designs and expressed interest in making a collaborative effort with him on this project.

David Lauren expressed support for the project but also concerns that the Commission may not have authority to enter into a contract to rent a billboard. Scott Garman suggested checking with the NH Attorney General's office to determine whether this was the case.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 PM.