

# THE STATUS OF MEN IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

## SECOND BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN

<http://www.nh.gov/csm/>

FEBRUARY 1, 2008

## CHARTER

The General Court recognizes that men are an important resource for families and children, and wishes to explore the causes and consequences of a variety of social, economic, educational, and health challenges facing men, and to have recommendations for relief made available to the public. Specifically, the General Court recognizes that fatherlessness is a severe social problem and that New Hampshire children who have a poor or nonexistent relationship with their father are the largest users of a variety of state-funded services. See enabling legislation HB 587-FN-A (Chapter 267:2, Laws of 2002, effective July, 1, 2002), and the PURPOSE thereof.

In addition, men whose average life expectancy was formerly on a par with that of women are now dying on average 10 years sooner, with much higher rates of suicide and mortality from the 15 leading causes of diseases and accidents. Educationally, the General Court recognizes the need to address the disproportionately poor performance of boys in the areas of reading and comprehension and to increase the grade passage rate for boys, while encouraging the pursuit of postsecondary degrees. The New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Men was therefore created by the legislature to address and reverse the deteriorating status of men and boys in New Hampshire.

Membership consists of seven members appointed by the Governor:

- Joseph H. Mastromarino, MD, Chair
- Scott A. Garman, Secretary
- David A. Lauren, Esq, Treasurer
- Larry K. Colby
- Michael J. Geanoulis
- Marshall D. Hickok, Esq
- Scott R. Meyer, PhD

Duties of the Commission include, but are not limited to:

- Examining issues and effects of cultural biases and stereotyping, beginning with childhood experiences and programs in public schools, and extending to include a study of male suicide and adult concerns such as family relations, promoting education and policies which bring fathers and children closer together, including in school settings.
- Studying health problems unique to men or which predominately affect men, and making appropriate recommendations.
- Promoting initiatives and programs that will enable men to develop career skills and continue their education so that they may become productive and responsible citizens.

The Commission, with this report, meets the legislative requirement to report its activities, findings, and recommendations for the general court and the administration pursuant to RSA 19-I.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN wishes to recognize the following, who either contributed to the substance of the report or supported the functioning of the Commission:

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Thom Linehan, UNH Extension Services, Family Education  
Dr. Elaine Holden and The Reading Foundation  
John Stephen, former Commissioner, Health & Human Services (H&HS)  
Neil Bouton, H&HS Division of Child Support Services  
Warren Farrell, PhD  
Justice Gerard Boyle  
John Sias and the NH Prostate Cancer Coalition  
RADAR (Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting)  
*<http://www.mediaradar.org>*  
Dr. Murray A. Straus and the UNH Family Research Lab  
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*<http://www.safe-nh.org>*  
Dr. Stevan Gressit  
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The Upham-Walker House  
The New Hampshire State Library

Members of the public who took valuable time away from their personal obligations to bring us a better sense of the concerns described herein.

The Commission would also like to thank the following former members of the Commission, whose terms ended before the completion of this report:

Stephen Gorin, PhD  
Alfred Lerandeau

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## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

The State of New Hampshire has demonstrated the capacity to serve as a national leader through the progressive creation of The Commission on the Status of Men. New Hampshire appears to be the only state in the United States to have created a commission to focus on these crucial concerns.

Since this Commission is groundbreaking in nature, it is susceptible to some of the types of misperceptions that frequently accompany innovative endeavors. Specifically, some of the issues that this Commission is studying and exploring are highly controversial in nature. While this Commission welcomes input from any and all parties - including those who take issue with items we are addressing - we are equally concerned that efforts are made to better clarify the mission, goals and objectives of this Commission.

The Commission on the Status of Men seeks to encourage government and community agencies to present an accurate and balanced view of the experiences of males in our state. We do so in order to highlight the changing status of men and boys in the new millennium. We are concerned about issues that include but are not limited to such things as the father/child relationship, male role models for children who lack consistent male role models in their lives, the nature, quality and challenges involved in pre-k, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education of boys and young men, factors in the workplace that impact men's roles in their families, the impact of social policy on the ability of males to develop across the lifespan in ways that promote biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual health.

This Commission believes that the ability to examine quality data regarding the status of men in our state and in the United States will enable New Hampshire to be able to forecast the ways in which such issues will impact our citizens. Specifically, determining how to best shape social policies and program funding to address the current issues related to promoting healthy male development will result in improved quality of life for men and resultant male behaviors. In turn, this will create higher quality relationships between boys and girls, men and their children, men and women, and men and their families. In addition, it will lead to a higher level of high school completion and college graduation, a more physically and emotionally healthy workforce, and an even greater number of active, productive and engaged men in our communities. The end result will be a better quality of life for all citizens in New Hampshire.

## **HISTORY**

In 1998, House Bill 1377 was introduced to the New Hampshire Legislature, aiming to establish a Commission on the Status of Men (CSM). It failed to gain the approval of the House Finance Committee. The following year, the effort was repeated under House Bill 553. After a detailed inspection of preliminary evidence, including burgeoning male mortality, suicide, educational failure, and fatherless rates, the House was moved to share the sense of urgency of the bill's sponsor, Representative David Bickford, and recommended passage of the bill on June 23, 1999 by a vote of 210 to 76.

The Senate Executive Departments Committee then amended the bill. In the ensuing

House/Senate committee of conference, it was agreed to create a Legislative Committee to Study the Status of Men (LCSSM) to review these alleged problems in further detail, make recommendations as necessary, and return to the Legislature by February 15, 2001 with a full report. The bill passed the Legislature in this form and was signed into law by the Governor in June, 2000.

The duties of the LCSSM were threefold: To examine, study, and promote the duties requirements of HB 553. The LCSSM noted with some alarm the rapidly deteriorating status of men in New Hampshire. This deterioration begins with increasing rates of father absence in a children's lives, which correlates with accelerating trends of:

- Disproportionally low reading scores
- Increased school dropout rates
- Lower rates of enrollment in secondary and graduate degree programs
- Higher crime and incarceration rates

Among adult men, the LCSSM also noted:

- Relative under-funding of health issues which primarily affect men, particularly in regard to preventative health services for men
- Markedly higher suicide rates for men than women, as well as mortality rates that are higher than those of women, resulting in a life span that is significantly shorter than women in New Hampshire
- A lack of support groups for men in general
- Perceived negative disparities in the family court system
- That New Hampshire has the second highest child support rate in the nation
- Perceived use of false claims of domestic violence in divorce cases, which served to deprive men of their families, homes, and possessions without appropriate due process

Due to the overwhelming nature of the problems uncovered, the LCSSM could do little by way of “promotion” or “prevention” because of time and resource constraints. The LCSSM could not, for example, explore causes and prevention for the heartbreak of suicide; nor could it promote higher levels of father involvement with their children, or improve the education deficit of boys. Furthermore, many items on the list of topics the LCSSM hoped to examine were not readily available and so recommended establishing a Commission on the Status of Men (CSM) to promote initiatives, programs, and further study.

Early in 2001, Representative David Bickford filed HB 587-FN-A for the purpose of establishing a Commission on the Status of Men (CSM) and appropriating \$69,561 to facilitate its duties. After passing the House, the Senate amended the bill months later by stripping its funding. HB 587 and the unfunded Commission on the Status of Men became effective the following year on July 1, 2002. The Commission held its first meeting on October 31, 2003.

## **ESTABLISHED COMMITTEES**

The following committees were internally established to organize responsibilities in critical areas of the Commission's work.

### **Public Initiatives**

**Objectives:** To bring in representatives from various institutions, including public schools and the court system, to organize public hearings and promote initiatives in all areas of the Commission's mission.

### **Improving the Father/Child Connection**

**Objectives:** To study the importance of fathers to children and families, and to investigate the link between fatherless children and the need for a variety of state-funded services.

### **The Status of Boys and Young Men in Education**

**Objectives:** To research and report on the educational status of males in schools, ranging from early childhood education through postsecondary education.

### **The Status of Men's Health**

**Objectives:** To research and report on the health status of men during all stages of men's lives.

## **EDUCATION**

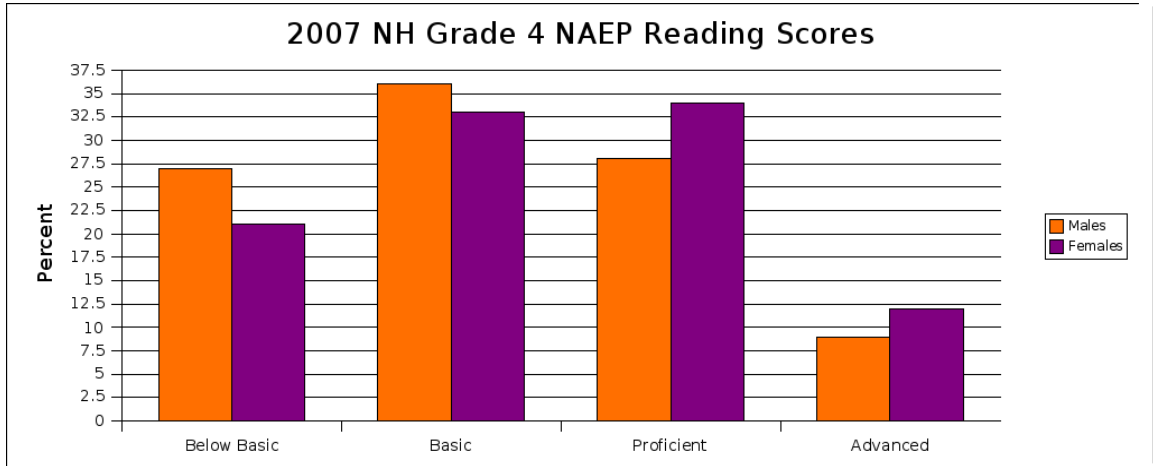
This Commission's first biennial report in 2005 received attention for highlighting the gender gaps in education for New Hampshire students. Areas of greatest concern were in the lower reading scores of boys and lower college/university attendance rates of young men. The fact that boys and young men are struggling in these and other areas is slowly gaining traction in public awareness, and is recently receiving increased attention by education researchers. The following is a small snapshot of the current state of this problem and a comparison with 2005 data.

### **Reading Scores**

Reading scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) demonstrate that while slight improvements have been achieved in the scores of both boys and girls, the gender gap has not changed. Their 2007 report, *The Nation's Report Card*, notes that nationally, "the 7-point score gap between [boys and girls] was not significantly different from the gaps in 2005 or in 1992."

A continuing area of concern is that the gender gap between boys and girls widens dramatically between Grades 4 and 8 in the most critical reading level, *Below Basic*. This

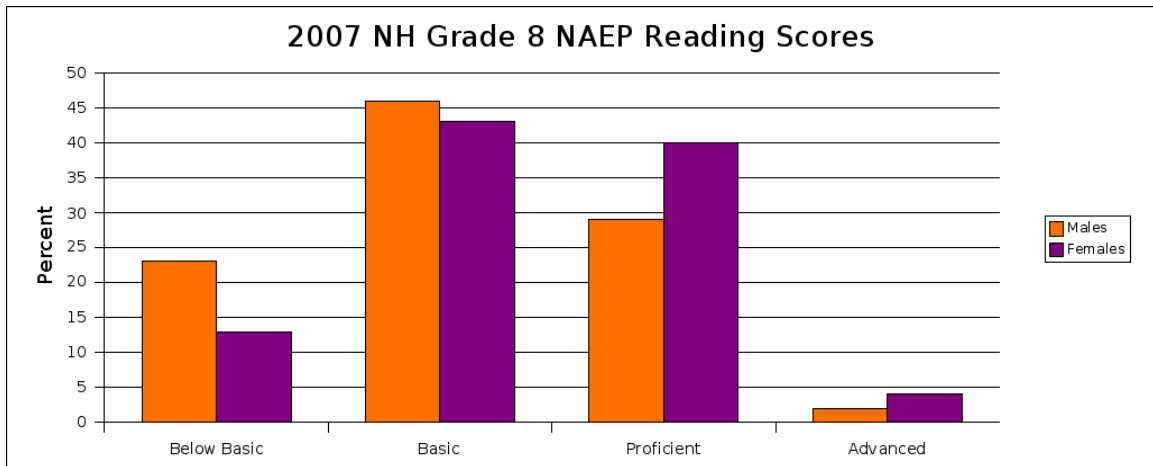
difference for New Hampshire students is six percentage points at Grade 4, but widens to ten percentage points by Grade 8.



**Table 1E: New Hampshire Grade 4 NAEP Reading Scores, 2007**

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
Males	27%	36%	28%	9%
Females	21%	33%	34%	12%

Source: *The Nation's Report Card 2007, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*



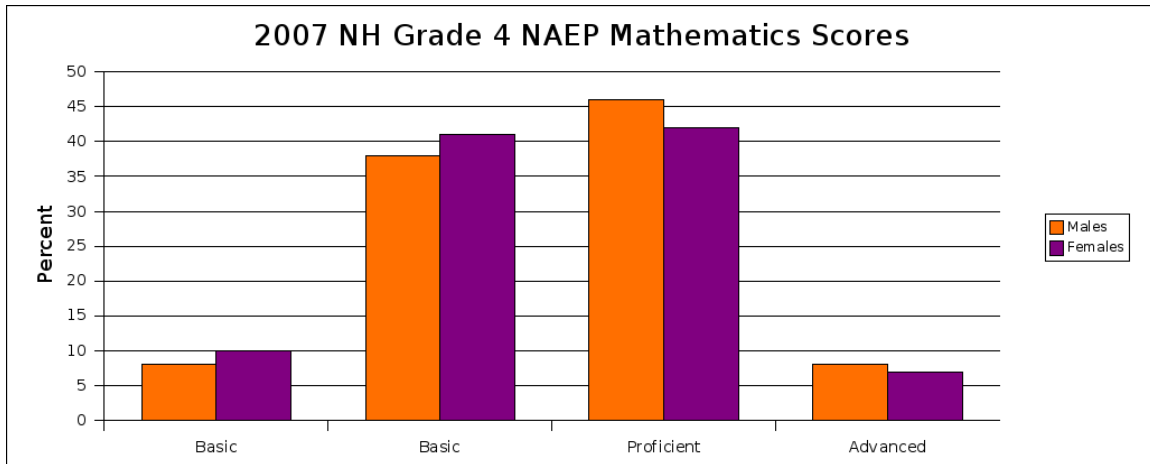
**Table 2E: New Hampshire Grade 8 NAEP Reading Scores, 2007**

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
Males	23%	46%	29%	2%
Females	13%	43%	40%	4%

Source: *The Nation's Report Card 2007, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*

## Mathematics Scores

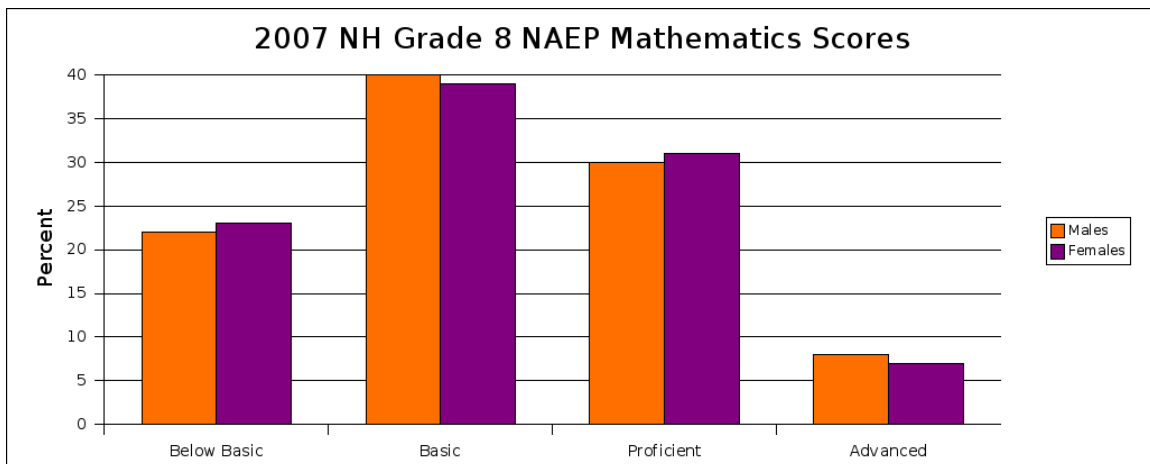
The 2007 NAEP scores in Mathematics for New Hampshire students demonstrate that the math gap between boys and girls is much smaller than the reading gap. In further contrast to the *Below Basic* level in reading scores, the gender gap (in favor of boys this time) is only two percentage points at Grade 4, and narrows to one percentage point by Grade 8.



**Table 3E: New Hampshire Grade 4 NAEP Mathematics Scores, 2007**

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
Males	8%	38%	46%	8%
Females	10%	41%	42%	7%

*Source: The Nation's Report Card 2007, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*



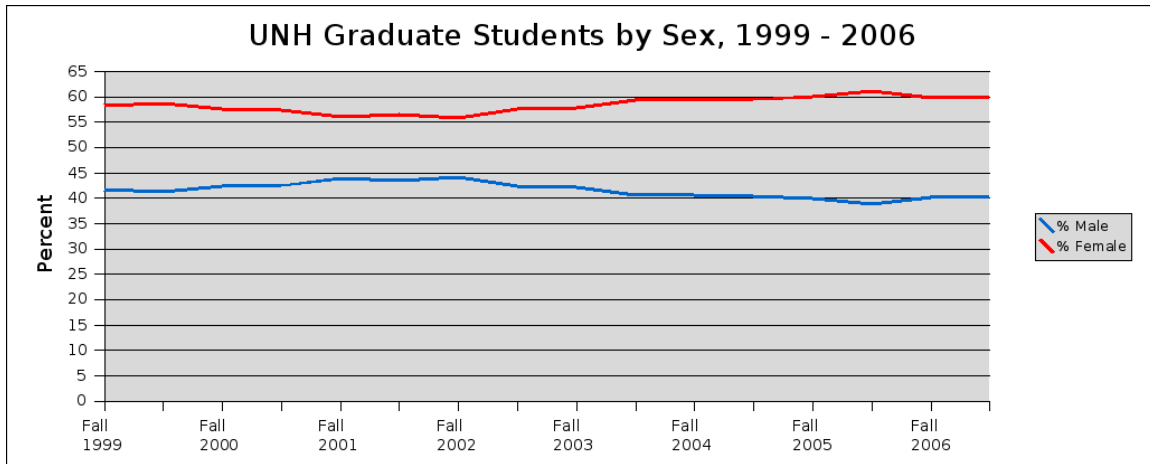
**Table 4E: New Hampshire Grade 8 NAEP Mathematics Scores, 2007**

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Below Basic</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
Males	22%	40%	30%	8%
Females	23%	39%	31%	7%

*Source: The Nation's Report Card 2007, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*

## Postsecondary Education

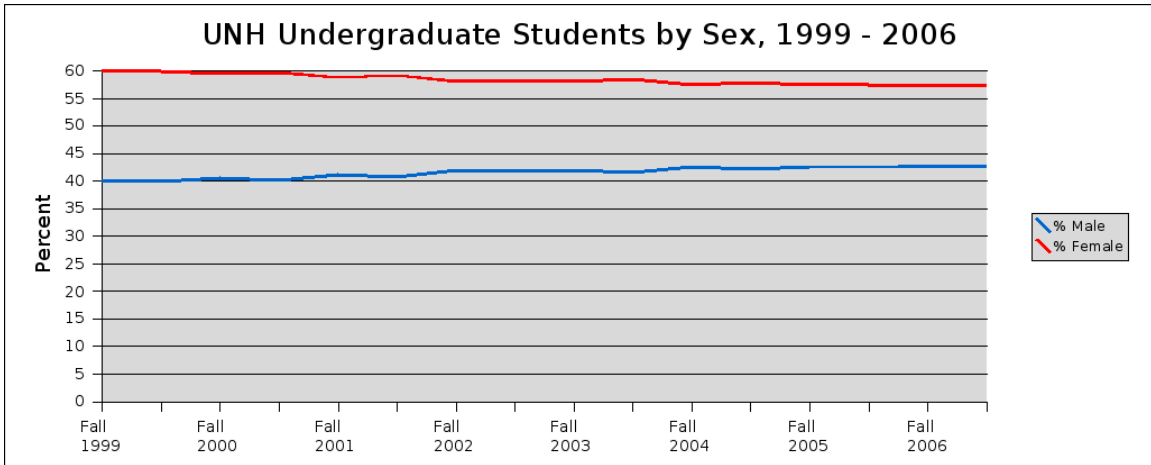
Data from the University of New Hampshire Institutional Research department shows a significant disparity between the numbers of male and female students enrolled. At the undergraduate and graduate level, the data shows that young men comprise only 40-43% of the student population. Only in the Associate Degree program is this trend reversed, where men were 60% of the student population. The following charts illustrate that there has been little change in these trends since 2000.



**Table 5E: UNH, Durham - Graduate Students by Sex, 1999-2005**

Semester	% Male	% Female
Fall 1999	41.8	58.2
Spring 2000	41.3	58.7
Fall 2000	42.3	57.7
Spring 2001	42.5	57.5
Fall 2001	43.9	56.1
Spring 2002	43.4	56.6
Fall 2002	44.1	55.9
Spring 2003	42.4	57.6
Fall 2003	42.1	57.9
Spring 2004	40.6	59.4
Fall 2004	40.6	59.4
Spring 2005	40.5	59.5
Fall 2005	40.0	60.0
Spring 2006	38.8	61.2
Fall 2006	40.2	59.8
Spring 2007	40.1	59.9

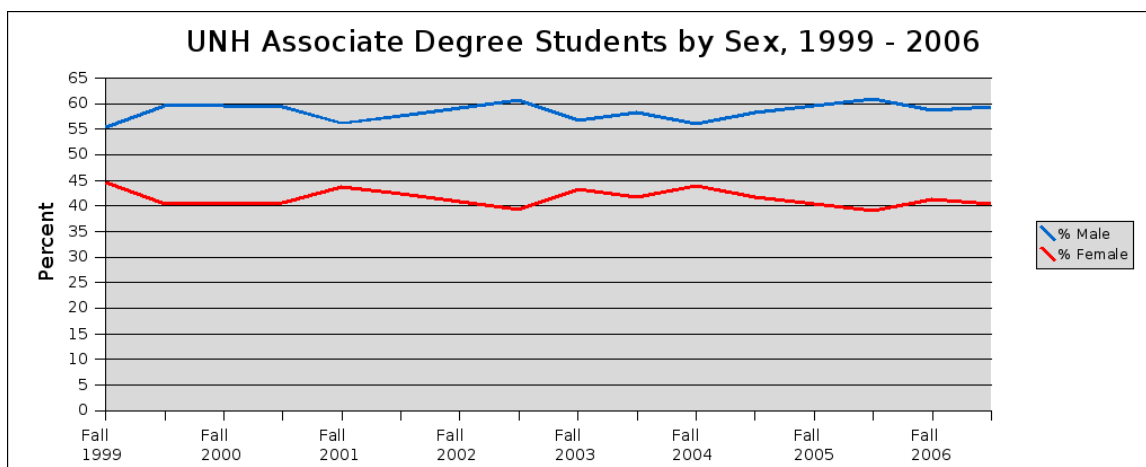
Source: University of New Hampshire Institutional Research



**Table 6E: UNH, Durham - Undergraduate Students by Sex, 1999-2005**

Semester	% Male	% Female
Fall 1999	40.1	59.9
Spring 2000	40.0	60.0
Fall 2000	40.5	59.5
Spring 2001	40.2	59.8
Fall 2001	41.2	58.8
Spring 2002	40.8	59.2
Fall 2002	42.0	58.0
Spring 2003	41.8	58.2
Fall 2003	42.0	58.0
Spring 2004	41.6	58.4
Fall 2004	42.6	57.4
Spring 2005	42.1	57.9
Fall 2005	42.6	57.4
Spring 2006	42.5	57.5
Fall 2006	42.8	57.2
Spring 2007	42.6	57.4

*Source: University of New Hampshire Institutional Research*



**Table 7E: UNH, Durham - Associate Degree Students by Sex, 1999-2005**

Semester	% Male	% Female
Fall 1999	55.4	44.6
Spring 2000	59.6	40.4
Fall 2000	59.6	40.4
Spring 2001	59.4	40.6
Fall 2001	56.2	43.8
Spring 2002	57.6	42.4
Fall 2002	59.2	40.8
Spring 2003	60.7	39.3
Fall 2003	56.7	43.3
Spring 2004	58.2	41.8
Fall 2004	56.1	43.9
Spring 2005	58.3	41.7
Fall 2005	59.6	40.4
Spring 2006	60.9	39.1
Fall 2006	58.8	41.2
Spring 2007	59.5	40.5

*Source: University of New Hampshire Institutional Research*

The Commission is concerned with the long-term ramifications of such enrollment figures – that fewer young men than women are enrolled in traditional four-year programs within the University of New Hampshire. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, education plays a more important role in a person's success than ever before. The Commission is dedicated to collect further data in order to investigate the reasons for this enrollment disparity, and to provide recommendations for eventually achieving parity.

## Reading Learning Disabilities

During its July 2006 meeting, the Commission invited Dr. Elaine Holden from *The Reading Foundation* as a guest speaker. Dr. Holden is an education specialist with over 30 years of experience, and for ten years has co-owned *The Reading Foundation*, based in Amherst, NH. *The Reading Foundation* is a private educational program which specializes in working with students who have learning disabilities, particularly reading-related disabilities and dyslexia. Dr. Holden provided the Commission with some information of value to policymakers:

- Boys make up 3/4 of all students in special education programs nation-wide.
- Research from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) has found that about 80% of U.S. students with learning disabilities specifically have reading disabilities as their primary or only disability.
- About 11% of NH school-age children experience chronic ear infections during the time they are learning the basics of language. This simple health issue can block or distort the sounds of language and hinder efforts to learn how to read.
- Even though women are now well integrated into the workforce, men by and large still feel cultural pressure to earn more money and serve as primary breadwinners for their families. In response to this pressure, most men thus see the private sector - not teaching - as the area to pursue their careers.
- Dr. Holden discussed an anecdote about a man who went into teaching late in his life after he felt he had been a successful breadwinner for his family. He explained that he went into teaching because he felt he could finally "afford to do it."
- Dr. Holden expressed concern that, to the best of her knowledge, the Reading Recovery Program, used in many NH public schools, had no longitudinal research supporting its effectiveness.
- Dr. Holden recommended that there be a stronger recruitment effort to get men into early childhood education and general reading education teaching careers. Raising teacher salaries is one way of helping to do this. She also saw a strong need for cultural support in viewing men as nurturers, even in the home.

## Education Conclusions

According to the data presented above, almost no change has occurred in the status of New Hampshire boys and young men in educational performance, and therefore this report will echo the conclusions it included in 2005.

Given the widespread success of special programs to increase the performance of girls in mathematics over the past ten years, **the Commission recommends further study and implementation of educational programs tailored to the needs of boys in reading and writing to help close the reading gap.**

Also, while the Commission notes that more information about the status of boys in education is becoming available, it **encourages higher visibility of the low educational status of boys and young men in both the media and among education policymakers.**

## THE STATUS OF FATHERS

In a speech before the World Congress of Families, former director of the U.S. Administration on Children and Families, Dr. Wade Horn, stated that one out of every three children in America is living in a home without his or her natural father. One out of every three children in America will go to bed tonight without a father to read them a story, bring them a glass of water, kiss them good night, or comfort them if they have a bad dream.

The problem of fatherlessness is getting worse, not better. By some estimates, 60 percent of American children born in the 1990s will live a significant portion of their childhood in a home without their natural father present. Indeed, for the first time in America's history, the average expected experience of childhood now includes a significant amount of time living without one's natural father. According to Dr. Horn, the causes of this shift include high rates of divorce and children born out of wedlock. See [http://www.worldcongress.org/wcf3\\_spkrs/wcf3\\_horn.htm](http://www.worldcongress.org/wcf3_spkrs/wcf3_horn.htm).

### The Importance of Fathers

As stated in the Commission's previous report, lack of father presence has been linked to systemic problems such as poverty, high school dropout rates, crime, adolescent drug use, teenage pregnancy, and a higher demand for a variety of state-funded services. Worse still, children who grow up fatherless are more likely to commit suicide than those with a father present. (See "Father Facts," a compendium of research excerpts available via <http://www.fatherhood.org>)

According to Dr. Horn, one of the editors of the 2004 *Father Facts* booklet, it seems clear that children growing up without their father in the home face an increased risk of developing significant problems. This does not mean that all children who grow up in fatherless homes will encounter problems. Indeed, many of them will do just fine. But research indicates that fatherless children face more obstacles than those who grow up with both a mom and a dad, and are at greater risk for a host of developmental problems.

In a world comprised of females and males, the need for children to have healthy role models of both sexes is of great value. Some authors have asserted that single mothers are capable of raising exceptional men without the influence of the biological father (Drexler, 2005). Given the number of dedicated and competent single mothers, this is true for many children.

However, randomly conducted research, some of which is referenced in our earlier reports, suggests that significant numbers of children will suffer lower wellness levels when their biological father is absent from their lives. Such children are more likely to be impoverished, physically abused, sexually abused, and develop behavioral problems requiring psychiatric treatment and medication. See Horn & Sylvester, *Father Facts* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, National Fatherhood Initiative, pp 103 – 152. Available via <http://www.fatherhood.org>.

On a related note, a report from the National Center for Education Statistics released in July of 2006 indicates that children with involved fathers fare better because they are less likely

to fail or repeat a grade, more likely to do their homework, more likely to become involved in school extracurricular activities, and more likely to attend a college or university. The report, *Fathers of U.S. Children Born in 2001: Findings from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study*, by Avenilla, Rosenthal, and Tice, can be seen at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006002>.

## What About Dads?

One study from the Urban Institute found that most foster children were not living with their fathers at the time they were removed from their homes. While in foster care, these children may experience even less contact with their nonresident fathers. The study examined child welfare practices with respect to identifying, locating, and involving fathers of children in foster care and found that nonresident fathers are often not involved in case planning, and nearly half were never contacted by the child welfare agency. See *What About the Dads?* at <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411316>.

In light of this finding, **the Commission strongly recommends that the New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth and Families identify and report to the legislature data regarding how many nonresident fathers they have attempted to contact and to what extent (number of attempts), and detail the methods of the attempts to contact them in order to participate in case planning for their child.**

This Commission has also discovered that the Division of Child Support Services removed a job-description requirement for enforcement officers to redress violations of court-ordered parenting provisions. Given what we know about the persistently low compliance rates of disenfranchised dads, **this Commission recommends that DCSS should review its decision to modify the job description. Due to the importance of the father-child connection, we further recommend that DCSS enforce court ordered parenting provisions with the same level of diligence used to enforce child support orders.** The Commission feels that considerable savings to the taxpayer could be achieved with a higher level of encouragement for father involvement in most areas of child-welfare policy. Research has discovered 90% compliance of court ordered child support by fathers who are involved with their children. (Braver, 1998)

## Parental Alienation Syndrome

During its February 2007 meeting, the Commission invited Dr. Stevan Gressit to talk about issues related to Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS). Parental Alienation Syndrome is defined by Dr. Richard Gardner as

“a disorder that arises primarily in the context of child-custody disputes. Its primary manifestation is the child's campaign of denigration against a parent, a campaign that has no justification. It results from the combination of a programming (brainwashing) parent's indoctrinations and the child's own contributions to the vilification of the target parent.”

Dr. Gressit is a psychiatrist from Maine and a former staff member of the Women's

Prison of NH. Dr. Gressit stated that in his professional work, he has seen many cases of parental alienation, which seem to be most often directed against fathers. This alienation frequently involves visitation interference against fathers, and he is concerned that the family court system is not sufficiently recognizing the need for both parents in children's lives.

Dr. Gressit described that he has seen in his practice children of divorced or separated parents who are learning the lesson that court orders are not consistently enforced in family courts. The lesson that the court's orders are not respected is then internalized and applied in the context of criminal courts when the child is older and getting involved in criminal behavior. Dr. Gressit does not believe that anyone in law enforcement, in New Hampshire or Maine, has ever enforced visitation orders, and this has made the flaunting of these orders commonplace. In light of this assertion, **the Commission recommends that the legislature request that the court system report on methods and outcomes of efforts to enforce visitation orders in New Hampshire.**

In his practice, Dr. Gressit also noted that he has seen many custodial mothers move from New Hampshire to Maine in order to move their children away from their fathers - a component of parental alienation. He has been involved with the first legislative effort in Maine to deal specifically with Parental Alienation Syndrome, and consulted with New Hampshire DHHS Commissioner John Stephen to promote legislation (HB 1585) that would address enforcement of parenting time violations.

Dr. Gressit noted that his caseload has an over-representation of children from single parent homes who are having problems because of a poor or non-existent relationship with the other parent, usually the father. He believes that a child who has two parents with differing rules and disciplining approaches is generally significantly better off than a child who is cut off from a parent by way of parental alienation.

Dr. Gressit has compiled numerous reports and research related to parental alienation, which can be found on the Commission's web site in a compressed archive form at [http://www.nh.gov/csm/pas\\_gressitt.html](http://www.nh.gov/csm/pas_gressitt.html).

## **Paternity**

An attempt is being made to determine the extent to which the father is not named on the birth certificate, along with an estimate of the numbers of such certificates which show the father's surname to be different from that of the child. This information is important to children for medical and genetic reasons. It's also important to assess and understand, for emotional reasons related to identity and for possible prevention efforts, all of the conditions under which children and their natural dads are disconnected from each other.

## **Birth Certificates**

There are a few areas in birth-related laws that make it possible for the father to be left unnamed on the child's birth certificate.

For example, under the authority of RSA 5-C:19X, the mother, without a stated reason, can refuse to give information regarding the father of the child, and the hospital shall then enter "not stated" on the birth record "for all information pertaining to the father of the child."

While there may be valid reasons for not listing the natural father on any birth certificate, the state of New Hampshire should examine whether such reasons are better governed by law and not by personal fiat. This Commission feels that ordinarily, every child should be able to trace his or her paternity and therefore resolves as follows:

*The Commission on the Status of Men supports, in principle, the inclusion of the father's name on a child's birth certificate, while recognizing there are certain instances where public policy might dictate non-inclusion.*

**The Commission recommends that the legislature review the birth certificate laws under RSA 5-C:19 to determine the extent to which such laws should be modified to increase the likelihood that fathers and their children would be brought closer together. This may include a study of how the impact of such inclusion or omission of father identity relates to child development.**

## **Paternity Fraud**

Paternity fraud is defined by Carnell Smith as the act of falsely naming a man to be the biological father. Anecdotal evidence suggests that paternity fraud remains a growing concern, both for the father who later discovers that his alleged child was actually fathered by another man, and for the child who should have a reliable history of his paternity for reasons of emotional health and medical history.

A number of sources find that, for those who undergo a paternity test, as many as 30% prove negative for the alleged father. (The Blood Bank Association, Carnell Smith of [www.paternityfraud.com](http://www.paternityfraud.com), Lee Newman of [www.safe-nh.org](http://www.safe-nh.org)).

A number of states have passed laws allowing men to dis-establish paternity under these fraudulent circumstances. Some suggest that in an effort to safeguard the stability of children, men should not sign paternity papers until testing can ascertain with certainty who the father is. This Commission has tabled this sensitive issue for future deliberation.

## **A Discussion with DHHS Commissioner John Stephen**

A number of questions and issues were discussed with then Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Commissioner John Stephen, including:

- The percent of children living in a home absent their natural father in both the general population and the population of those requiring state-funded services for comparison purposes.
- The need for dialogue with father's groups to better facilitate the father/child connection.
- Whether the need exists for compliant obligors to be governed by expensive child support

services and wage assignment.

- The need to quantify the extent to which fatherless families represent an expense to the state, especially in foster care, TANF and adoption cases.
- The percent of birth certificates being created that have the father's surname unlisted or different from that of the child - both from the general population and the population of those requiring state-funded services for comparison purposes.
- Information about the Ad-hoc Committee on Marriage which met, or is meeting, on a regular basis at the Brown Building in Concord.
- The role of the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence in lobbying activities on legislation unrelated to domestic and sexual violence.

A recurring theme in these discussions was that data on these issues would be difficult to obtain, so it was suggested that a liaison be established between the Commission and H&HS. This liaison's purpose would be to explore ways to address the issue of fatherless and how it impacts children and families, and to collect needed data to examine these issues on an ongoing basis. A follow-up letter requesting related information was sent to Commissioner Stephen in April, 2006. See *Appendix B* for a copy of this letter.

Given the importance of each of this discussion, a transcript of the meeting was made and may be downloaded from the Commission's web site at [http://www.nh.gov/csm/downloads/NHCSM\\_John\\_Stephens\\_DHHS\\_Transcript.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/csm/downloads/NHCSM_John_Stephens_DHHS_Transcript.pdf).

## **Child Support**

### **Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) RFP for Access and Visitation**

The Commission received a Request for Proposal, 08-DCSS-AV-03, requesting bids to develop a supervised visitation center. Commissioner Geanoulis proposed that the Commission become involved in this RFP process. The purpose of the Commission's involvement would be to improve child well being (and child support collections rates) by strengthening the father/child connection, and making such visitation centers more welcoming to fathers. Stanford Braver's research shows compliance rates of 90% and above for fathers who still feel like fathers to their children. Presently, DCSS reports 64% compliance rates - a rate that has been relatively stable over twenty years in spite of increased enforcement efforts.

The Commission is willing to provide forms of technical assistance to community agencies interested in writing proposals in response to such RFPs. In addition, the Commission encourages DHHS to continue to fund such initiatives and collect feedback from participants to identify ways of improving these programs.

### **Neil Boutin, NH Division of Child Support Services**

Neil Boutin, Manager of Parenthood Programs for the NH Division of Child Support Services (DCSS), told the Commission in a meeting that a voluntary in-hospital paternity acknowledgment program is used in more than 25 hospitals throughout the state. The program finds that 90% of the time when children are born, the father is present, regardless of whether the

parents are married or not.

In this program, a nurse then explains to the parents the benefits of establishing paternity at that time, and offers an affidavit for unmarried parents to confirm paternity and have the father's name listed on the birth certificate. Mr. Bouton noted that New Hampshire is one of the top ten states in the country in establishing paternity.

Mr. Bouton outlined a number of programs that the DCSS offers related to the Commission's mission of bringing fathers and children closer together. These included programs to help fathers become able to afford to pay their child support, programs to help keep incarcerated fathers in touch with their children, and to generally increase access of noncustodial parents (often fathers) with their children.

Mr. Bouton noted that only about 35% of NH cases involve DCSS. The only time DCSS gets involved is when required to via a court order. This poses some problems in understanding issues surrounding child support, because data on cases not handled by DCSS is unavailable. Mr. Bouton suggested that the Commission could advocate that the courts keep records on the child support cases which are not ordered to go through DCSS.

Within DCSS cases, about 40% of cases are from unmarried parents, about 30% are from separated parents, and about another 30% are from divorced parents. The federal government has been pushing for mandatory wage assignments, and about 70% of DCSS cases involve wage assignment.

Mr. Bouton distributed materials from DCSS, including videos on such topics as

- Mediation
- Co-parenting and developing parenting plans
- The importance of maintaining child contact with both parents
- Positive parenting
- How to reduce conflict
- Child support and visitation information
- How to modify child support orders

## **Male Mentoring Programs**

Discussions with advocates of male mentoring programs and human service administrators produced the impression that while father substitute initiatives can be a positive experience for boys and girls who lack paternal stability in their lives, such programs seem, on average, as a less than desirable alternative in cases where the natural father, absent compelling reasons to the contrary, can be made available by ordinary means.

Mentoring and other programs like foster care and adoption can, and should, be used to facilitate the best interests of children. But absent convincing evidence to the contrary, such programs should not be seen as sufficient supports for healthy youth development to allow for decreased efforts to promote, preserve and protect the father/child connection. Further, such

programs must be held to standards that best assure protection of youth in contacts with non-familial adult mentors. Such efforts should include criminal background checks, reference checks, close supervision and monitoring and youth safety training for participating youth and parent(s).

Anecdotal evidence and peer reviewed research suggest that father involvement is not being solicited in human service related cases like DCYF, TANF, Foster Care and adoption, where efforts to provide for children go forward without notice to the father, or even an invitation to encourage his participation. The Commission hopes to get more needed data on this issue in the future.

## **“Fathers Count” Event**

An event to promote the ordinary importance of father involvement for families and children is a project that the Commission would like to move forward with. The proposed event would be titled "Fathers Count." However, to develop and run such an event requires considerably more resources to develop than this Commission has in its present form, and as such this event is still in the early planning stages. The Commission requests and welcomes help from the public to move this project forward.

## **USDA Women-Infants-Children (WIC) Program**

It was brought to the attention of the Commission that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a nutrition program called WIC (Women, Infants and Children) that is available to both mothers and fathers. However, that fact is not immediately obvious because of the title WIC, combined with the pamphlet cover materials depicting only women and children.

A government program that seeks to improve child and family wellness while portraying only women and children in that program sends inappropriate messages to fathers, who may begin to wonder about the extent to which they matter for their children and families. This Commission feels that fathers who are impoverished may also have nutritional needs for their children; that any government program providing for poor families ought to project in a manner that is equitable and fair; and that any program designed to improve family wellness should address both parents in a manner consistent with equity and neutrality. Out of these concerns the Commission sent a letter to the USDA asking for them to consider changing the way they market this program to the public. See *Appendix C* for a copy of the letter the Commission sent to the USDA.

## **NH Task Force on Work and Family**

Commissioner Geanoulis, who represents the Commission on the recently formed Task Force and Work and Family (TFWF), reports that at the time of this report, the Task Force is just beginning its work. Commissioner Geanoulis has emphasized the need to encourage father involvement and healthy marriages, or healthy cohabitations, as the best way to combine family resources in efforts to obtain relief from work/family problems and reduce the need for

government programs.

Commissioner Geanoulis also asked the TFWF:

- To look at the difficulties some ordinary-income, non-resident fathers experience in keeping up with their child support payments.
- To examine the possibility that some government programs may be counterproductive in some efforts to involve both parents on work/family issues.
- To consider examining ways to have some marriages circumvent use of domestic violence intervention by the criminal justice system in lower level problem areas that might be effectively served with counseling, compromise, and improved communication. Such a shift should be considered only in situations where safety of all family members can be assured.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

A vast majority of the comments from the public came in the form of complaints about unfair treatment in family court.

One man came forward to state in no uncertain terms that he should not have been ordered to pay child support after being given primary custody of his child. Other obligors thought that child support orders in shared parenting arrangements seemed unfair - resembling a kind of hidden alimony.

Many men felt that restraining orders are being dispensed unfairly and that they should have been heard before such orders were allowed by the court.

A recurring theme was also that documented cases of perjury are not possible to redress. For example, the Commission has been told that prosecuting attorneys will not bring corrective action in cases of perjury. As a consequence, family courts are held in disrespect and regarded by many as a "liar's paradise."

Fathers have also complained that they are unable to get the police to enforce RSA 633:4, a law criminalizing the withholding of a child from a parent during his/her court assigned parenting time.

Stephen Baskerville, author and lecturer, describes much of what happens in today's family courts as the legacy of "No Fault" divorce laws in which men (and some women) can be criminalized for being involved in what might otherwise be considered ordinary disagreements. (See Baskerville, S. "Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family, 2007.")

## **MEN'S HEALTH**

### **Prostate Cancer**

Prostate cancer continues to be a major health risk to men as they age. John Sias, president of the New Hampshire Prostate Cancer Coalition, reports:

*This year [2007], more men in New Hampshire will be diagnosed with prostate cancer than women with breast cancer. Prostate Cancer is the greatest cancer killer of men over 50. More than 10,000 New Hampshire men will turn 50 this year and every year. The American Cancer Society predicts that 1,200 men in our state will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year. And another 140 will die from it. One of every six men will get prostate cancer sometime during his life.*

One of the most important factors in preventing deaths by prostate cancer is early detection. The New Hampshire legislature is currently considering a bill, HB 560-FN, which would require health insurance providers in the state to cover prostate cancer screening for men aged 50+, and for men aged 45+ who are considered at high risk for the disease due to family history or other factors. Preventative breast cancer screenings are currently required to be covered in the same way. The Commission unanimously passed a resolution in support of this bill during its March 2007 meeting.

The Commission would also like to raise public awareness of prostate cancer support groups throughout the state, which currently meet monthly in Manchester, Lebanon, Nashua, Keene, and Concord. Details can be found on the NH Prostate Cancer Coalition web site at [http://nhprostatecancer.org/pages/support\\_groups.html](http://nhprostatecancer.org/pages/support_groups.html).

**RECOMMENDATION: The Commission recommends the passage of bill HB 560-FN, which would require health insurance providers in the state to cover prostate cancer screenings for men aged 50+ and for men aged 45+ who are considered at high risk.**

### **Domestic Violence**

#### **AOC Report on Domestic Violence Restraining Orders**

An Administrative Office of the Court's report on domestic violence, developed under a grant from the State Justice Institute (SJI 96-076E-T-A-162, March, 1999), represents the latest official findings regarding the granting of ex-parte restraining orders in New Hampshire. These findings created a difference of opinion within the Commission.

Littleton and Salem data, while admittedly higher than the other districts measured, showed that the percentage of temporary restraining orders granted were 100% and 98%, respectively. Many of these orders were issued on an ex-parte basis, requiring the respondent to leave his or her home and family without the immediate opportunity to respond. Once this process is started, the respondent must deal with potential legal costs and face the difficulty of

proving one's innocence at a final hearing.

About one-fourth of emergency/temporary restraining orders were granted telephonically.

Members of the public have come forward to explain to the Commission how restraining orders were abused for the purpose of gaining an advantage in family court. While the Commission recognizes that restraining orders can serve a legitimate and necessary purpose, it also shares concerns with the public that abuse of these orders needs to be dealt with more effectively. Recognizing the impact of false allegations can have in proceedings in family court, the Commission encourages increased dialogue on this topic within the Bar Association to develop improvements in the restraining order system to help prevent abuses while preserving the protective role that such orders can serve.

Some Commissioners believe that judges need to err on the side of caution because of the possibility of murder or injury, and point out that the defendant has ten days to get into court for redress. Others, however, in citing the fact that two-thirds of those orders were eventually lifted, wondered about the wisdom of their issuance based on one-sided testimony to begin with; and the possibility that petitions for restraining orders should first provide for the immediate appearance of the defendant to answer and face his or her accuser. It was also argued that one-sided proceedings can be counterproductive, causing more harm than they prevent.

## **US House Resolution HRES 590**

It was brought to the Commission's attention that U.S. House Resolution, HRES 590, in its rightful effort to solve the problem of domestic violence, wrongfully portrayed only men as perpetrators and women as victims. The resolution can be seen at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:H.RES.590>.

This issue was brought to light by a report from RADAR (Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting) outlining the reasons why HRES 590 is biased against men. The RADAR analysis can be found at <http://www.mediaradar.org/docs/RADARanalysis-HRES590.pdf>.

Accordingly, the Commission approved and issued a resolution which requests that statistics on male victimization be included in HRES 590:

*Whereas the New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Men condemns violence against all segments of society, and*

*Whereas research indicates that victims of domestic violence include men and boys as well as women and girls, and*

*Whereas frequently the plight of male victims of domestic violence, whether it be the victimization of male partners in same sex or heterosexual relationships, or young boys is all too often overlooked when domestic violence is discussed, and*

*Whereas the inclusion of statistics detailing the incidence and effects of male victimization of domestic violence would serve to strengthen HRES590 by clearly demonstrating that domestic violence affects all societal segments,*

*NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Men urges that the sponsors of HRES590 add to the language of the said Resolution statistics from federal agencies including but not limited to:*

*Centers for Disease Control  
Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Administration for Children and Families  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
National Center on Family Homelessness*

*regarding the incidence of victimization of men and boys by domestic violence.*

## **United Nations Resolution**

A resolution created by RADAR (Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting), which points out biases and inaccuracies in a recent United Nations report on violence against women, was endorsed by the Commission along with 47 other co-signers around the country, including Dr. Murray Straus from the University of New Hampshire and Lee Newman's SAFE-NH organization. The resolution and its signatories can be found online at: <http://www.mediaradar.org/docs/UN-ViolenceReport-Resolution.pdf>.

## **Dr. Murray Straus Testimony**

Dr. Murray Straus, co-director of the University of New Hampshire Family Research Laboratory in Durham, NH, spoke with the Commission extensively on the subject of family violence and its impact on men. An audio recording of his testimony is available in MP3 format on the Commission's web site at [http://www.nh.gov/csm/dv\\_straus.html](http://www.nh.gov/csm/dv_straus.html).

Dr. Straus presented a new research paper on international partner violence among younger populations (university students)[1]. This study found that university student populations differ significantly from the general population in terms of dating violence. In fact, three to five times as much dating violence occurs in university student populations than in the general population. Dr. Straus found that even when married couples are compared, there is on average more violence among younger married couples when compared to older couples.

The findings of the International Dating Violence Study found that in cases of domestic assaults:

- Males were the sole perpetrators in 9.9% of these cases.
- Females were the sole perpetrators in 21.4% of these cases.
- Both parties mutually perpetrated domestic assaults in the remaining 68.6% of these

cases.

Dr. Straus explained to the Commission that police data and crime reports at best describe 1/80th of all domestic assaults, due to the circumstances required for cases to obtain police involvement. Police reporting of domestic violence against men is underreported due to numerous social factors. There are many examples Dr. Straus could cite where the reporting of male victimization is not taken seriously by authorities. He noted that many police training manuals still exist with gender bias, referring to the perpetrator exclusively as "he" or "him," and the victim as "she" or "her."

The Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), developed by Dr. Straus in the 1970's, has been used in hundreds of family violence studies around the world, but domestic violence advocacy groups have made numerous attempts to find flaws in the CTS. Dr. Straus explained that criticisms of the CTS to date have not been based on empirical data and have not presented evidence to invalidate it.

Dominance, control, and the desire to correct unwanted or unacceptable behavior in a relationship are major factors in domestic violence. A noteworthy discovery is that these factors in domestic violence occur in about the same frequency in men and women. Additionally, there is no statistically significant difference between men and women in the initiation of domestic assaults.

See also a recent Centers for Disease Control study which found that reciprocal violence rates (i.e. both parties initiate violence) are about equal to the number of cases of non-reciprocal violence (i.e. one party is violent, one party is not). This is especially important because any policies that assume that all domestic violence involves a pure abuser and a pure victim are guaranteed to be inappropriate and likely to be harmful in the 50% of cases that are reciprocal. The second important point from the study is that in the other 50% of cases that are non-reciprocal, 70% involved violent women and non-violent men. Although on average men were more likely to inflict injury (presumably due to their larger size), a significant number of men sustained injuries inflicted by their female partners.  
<http://www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/97/5/941>

Dr. Straus' studies have found that self defense is a factor, on average, in about 15% of domestic assault cases, and that it is a nearly equally a factor for men as it is for women. Most partner violence is not in self defense. New Hampshire's data on domestic homicides are somewhat different from the national FBI statistics on domestic homicides because the number of homicides in NH is so low.

The Commission notes that the rate of injury is closely associated with gender. Assaults by men are three times as likely to cause serious injury than those by women. Of partner homicides over the last 20 years, approximately one-third are perpetrated by women.

Dr. Straus explained that the reasons that social awareness of this research is so limited has to do with the way the media works. In its efforts to always present multiple, often opposing perspectives on issues, there is an obligation in media reporting to interview women's advocates

whenever a story about domestic violence research is printed. While this media model is useful in certain contexts, many people don't recognize that when it comes to reporting on scientific research, contrasting views presented in the news often come from sources without reliable or unbiased empirical data to back up their claims.

As a long term trend, since nationally represented data was being measured (in 1975, 1985, 1992, and 1995), there has been a decrease in overall domestic assaults. However, if you look at the data by gender, nearly all of the decrease is in partner violence rates by men - while partner violence rates by women have remained the same. This demonstrates that the efforts of the women's movement to raise awareness and prevent domestic assaults by men have been working, and that efforts need to be made to address assaults by women.

The Commission feels it would be useful for Dr. Straus to be invited to speak at any of the NH Attorney General's annual domestic violence conferences or to speak before any of the member organization of the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, which to date has not occurred.

Dr. Straus suggested the following that might help the status of men in the area of domestic violence:

- That domestic violence awareness and prevention programs in public schools, some as early as middle school, be reviewed to ensure that they address violence by both men and women. Overwhelmingly these programs do not address violence by young women, which in fact is more frequent than violence by young males. The only program Dr. Straus is aware of that does address these issues is by Vangee Foshee at the University of North Carolina Medical School, and was sponsored by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).
- The creation of public service announcements that are balanced, and mention violence by women as well as men.
- That school-based violence prevention programs also raise awareness about the negative effects of parents spanking/using corporal punishment on children. Being spanked as a child has a significant correlation with committing partner violence later in life. Corporeal punishment establishes a moral understanding that hitting someone is a valid method of correcting unwanted behavior, which is the largest factor contributing to committing domestic violence as an adult. Mothers are substantially more likely to hit children, due to their increased childcare responsibilities. In addition, studies conclusively show that boys get hit more often and more severely than girls.

## **Teen Dating Violence**

Lee Newman from Stop Abuse for Everyone (SAFE-NH) was invited to speak to the Commission. Mr. Newman distributed an article on teen dating violence (Sex Survey 'EyeOpening' For Local Parents, by Marilyn Brown. The Tampa Tribune, December 11, 2005). The article discussed a school district 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.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

Since the publication of our last report, the Commission on the Status of Men has continued to gather and disseminate information on topics related to our mission. These include but are not limited to such things as:

- The importance of healthy father/child relationships.
- The status of boys and young men in education, ranging from early childhood to postsecondary education.
- Men's health issues, particularly widespread health issues such as prostate cancer.
- The impact of social policy on the ability of males to develop across the lifespan in ways that promote their biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual health.
- Factors in the workplace which impact men's roles in their families.

Further, we have continued to identify areas that require further study, areas in need of legislative and/or other forms of advocacy and intervention, and have provided a central place in our state government for people to address concerns regarding the status of men in New Hampshire.

This Commission deeply appreciates the ongoing interest and support shown to us by members of our government and private agencies, as well as by many of our citizens at large. We look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead, and are eager to make continued progress on serving our mission and the citizens of New Hampshire.

### **Recommendations**

The second biennial report of the New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Men includes eight core recommendations. These core recommendations are as follows:

**1. The Commission recommends further study and implementation of education programs tailored to the needs of boys in reading and writing to help close the reading gap.**

**2. The Commission strongly recommends that the New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth and Families identify and report to the legislature data regarding how many non-resident fathers they have attempted to contact and to what extent (number of attempts), and detail the methods of the attempts to contact them in order to participate in case planning processes for their child.**

**3. This Commission recommends that DCSS should review its decision to modify the job description for enforcement officers.**

- 4. Due to the importance of the father-child connection, we recommend that DCSS enforce court ordered parenting provisions with the same level of diligence used to enforce child support orders.**
- 5. The Commission recommends that the legislature request that the court system report on methods and outcomes of efforts to enforce visitation orders in New Hampshire.**
- 6. The Commission recommends that the legislature review the birth certificate laws under RSA 5-C:19 to determine the extent to which such laws should be modified to increase the likelihood that fathers and their children would be brought closer together. This may include a study of how the impact of such inclusion or omission of father identity relates to child development.**
- 7. The Commission recommends the passage of bill HB 560-FN, which would require health insurance providers in the state to cover prostate cancer screenings for men aged 50+ and for men aged 45+ who are considered at high risk.**
- 8. This Commission recommends that it should be funded in order to fulfill its mission as originally intended under HB 587 (2001) and HB 740 (2007). We recommend this in the interests of better fulfilling our mission and serving the citizens of New Hampshire.**

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## **APPENDIX B: Commission Letter to DHHS Commissioner John Stephen**

April 2006

Dear Commissioner Stephen:

Thank you for appearing before our commission at our last meeting and for giving us some idea of how we might better accomplish our mission to relieve the problems of fatherlessness, elevated male suicide/mortality rates, and the inferior reading/comprehension scores of boys.

We are especially interested, with this request for help, in obtaining public support for our efforts to elevate the status of men and boys. But we need more data.

According to data we received from the Dept. of Vital Statistics, approximately 5% of all New Hampshire birth certificates do not name the father, and an additional 5% have the surname of the father different from that of the child's.

During the deliberations to create a Commission on the Status of Men (CSM), lawmakers charged that fatherless children were the largest users of state funded services, and they intended that a CSM might obtain some relief for the taxpayer by bringing fathers and children closer together pursuant to RSA 19-I:4. With what we know about the wellness of fatherless children from the national data for such statistics as poverty, suicide and educational failure, we suspect that there is an overrepresentation of fatherless children in domains such as DCSS, TANF, and DCYF.

We therefore request quantifiable data on the fatherless condition in each of these domains as we discussed at our March meeting. We realize that such data may be difficult to obtain, but anything you might provide will help:

- (1) Percent of birth certificates in which the father is not named.
- (2) Percent of birth certificates in which surnames are different.
- (3) Percent of households in which the natural father does not live.

Any data that will help us determine the extent to which the natural father is not involved, as you see the need, will be very helpful.

Sincerely,

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

cc: Rep. David A. Bickford  
M. Bishop  
J. Williams

## **APPENDIX C: Commission Letter regarding the USDA Women-Infants-Children Program**

1 August 2007

Mike Johanns  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

The Commission recently was asked about equity issues with the WIC (Women Infants & Children) nutrition program as administered by your Food and Nutrition Service. We subsequently reviewed and discussed these issues at our most recent meeting. As a result of that review, we are respectfully suggesting some fairly inexpensive but crucially important modifications in the way that this valuable program is presented to the public.

We note that while the program is available to poor fathers who have nutritional needs for their children as well as poor mothers, and that by law the program must be gender-neutral, that fact is not immediately obvious. Your publication describing the program feature women on the cover pages and introductory information, implying that this is a program for and about women and their children, and one must delve into it in greater detail to discover that poor fathers may qualify as well.

We believe, as we are sure that you do, that any program designed to improve family wellness should encourage parental involvement on an equal basis. To do otherwise sends inappropriate messages about family responsibilities and the core needs of children.

We thus ask that you consider:

1. Changing the WIC program name to PIC (Parents Infants and Children).
2. Changing the wording of PIC's mission statement to include "parents, infants and children..."
3. Modifying photographs, brochures, publications, websites in such a way as to portray both mothers and fathers on an equal basis.
4. Any other changes you deem appropriate to acknowledge the greater role that fathers play in the healthy development of their children, that publicize the gender-neutral administration of your programs, and that encourage (in text and photographs) the equal responsibility of both fathers and mothers in fostering a healthy environment for their children.

Sincerely,

Joseph H. Mastromarino, MD  
Chair, New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Men  
PO Box 654  
Hampton, NH 03843

cc: John Salazar, F&NS Administrator  
Food and Nutrition Service  
3101 Park Center Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
John Stephen, NH H&HS Commissioner  
Mike Geanoulis, Chair, CSM Father/Child Connection