

**Ohio Commission on Fatherhood (“OCF”)**

**Minutes from the Meeting of**

**Thursday, November 4, 2010**

<p><b>Commissioners Present:</b></p> <p>Peter Lawson Jones, Chairman</p> <p>Representative Carlton Weddington</p> <p>Senator Ray Miller</p> <p>Mr. Robert Boykins</p> <p>Mr. Bo Chilton</p> <p>Mr. Cedric Collins</p> <p>Ms. Kimberly Dent</p> <p>Director Greg Hargett</p> <p>Mr. Thomas Eddie Joyce</p> <p>Dr. Diane Karther</p> <p>Mr. Steven Killpack</p> <p>Ms. Jewel Smith</p>	<p><b>Guests:</b></p> <p>Dr. Alvin Jackson, Ohio Department of Health</p> <p>Sondra Holt, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services: Office of Families &amp; children</p> <p>Benjamin Anderson, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services: Office of Child Support</p> <p>David Fleischman, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services: Office of Child Support</p> <p>Rona Dorsey, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation &amp; Corrections</p> <p>Lekiesha Hilton, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services: Office of Child Support</p> <p>Edward Stockhausen, Senator Shirley Smith, Ohio Senate</p> <p>Lavita Stokes, Three Leaf Productions</p> <p>Dr. Wilburn Weddington, Doctor</p> <p>Chip Weiant, Governor’s Office of Faith Based &amp; Community Initiatives</p>
<p><b>Commissioners Represented by Designee:</b></p>	<p><b>OCF Staff Present:</b></p> <p>Mr. J. Tracy Robinson, Executive Director</p> <p>Ms. Monica Mahoney</p> <p>Ms. Whitney Logan</p>

## **I. Call to Order & Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 11:15AM by Executive Director Tracy Robinson. Chairman Peter Lawson Jones arrived and a quorum was achieved. Chairman Jones introduced himself and welcomed our guests to the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood meeting.

## **II. Recognition of Commissioners' Service**

Chairman Jones and Director Robinson recognized term ending Commissioners Senator Ray Miller, Senator David Goodman, Representative Marian Harris, and Joseph Maiorano. Senator Miller commended the commission on its efforts to improve fatherhood and child's well being. He has been and honored Commissioner and a huge supported of the Commission since it has been established.

## **III. Approval of September 2, 2010 Minutes**

Commissioner Senator Ray Miller moved, with Commissioner Representative Carlton Weddington seconding, that the minutes from the meeting of September 2, 2010, be approved as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

## **IV. Executive Director's Report**

Director Robinson provided a written summary of his activities in June, July, and August, a synopsis of which has been incorporated in these minutes. Director Robinson highlighted his involvement in the following events and activities:

The Holy Day of Atonement, Lorain, Ohio. Mr. Robinson served as the keynote speaker and distributed lapel pins. (October 16, 2010)

3rd Annual Celebration of Fatherhood Town Hall Meeting, Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Robinson served as a panelist. (October 29, 2010)

WSOS Fatherhood Summit, Fremont, Ohio. Mr. Robinson served as the keynote speaker. (November 1, 2010)

Public Children Services Association of Ohio Conference Workshop, Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Robinson conducted a workshop on how to engage fathers. (October 7, 2010)

Briefed Monica Gillison, Executive Director of the Ohio Children's Trust Fund. Discussed purpose of Ohio Commission on Fatherhood. (September 20, 2010)

Ohio Congressional Delegation Liaisons, Washington, DC. Mr. Robinson briefed and hand delivered written letters from the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood supporting H.R. 2979: Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009 and S.B.1309: Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009 encouraging members and staff of Ohio Congressional Delegates to support new legislation. (September 15, 2010)

## **V. Legislation & Policy**

### **A. Senate Bill 292**

Edward Stockhausen, Legislative Aide of Ohio Senator Shirley Smith, informed the Commission on Senate Bill 292. Using the Ohio Child Support Guidelines Advisory Council's 2009 recommendations and additional collaborative efforts with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Child Support Directors Association, Senator Smith has introduced S.B. 292 to comprehensively reform Ohio's child support laws. Child support is an issue that touches thousands of Ohioans from all walks of life, and it is an issue which Senator Smith believes should be addressed with bipartisan support.

#### **Parenting Time Adjustment**

The current model for child support assumes that the custodial parent bears all of the costs for raising a child. This assumption does not account for any expenses the non-custodial parent may have when spending time with the child, especially when the court requires or grants such time.

In order to address this issue, S.B. 292 uses a two-fold approach to bring equity to parenting time when it is ordered by the court. A parent with standard court-ordered parenting time will receive a standard 8.75% decrease in the support order.

When parenting time exceeds 40%, the child support obligation will be adjusted using a calculation developed by the Council. If a parent does not think that these adjustments are sufficient, he or she may ask the court for a deviation based on other facts and circumstances. Using the same chart as before, we can show how these adjustments would work with the new Child Support Schedule.

### **Medical Support**

The current worksheets make it difficult for parents to know how changes in their children's health insurance coverage will affect child support orders. Unfortunately, recent changes in Ohio law have created inconsistencies and complications statewide. Senate Bill 292 fixes these problems by simplifying the "cash medical" calculation. The bill's new worksheets will produce one cash medical obligation that is paid in addition to the regular child support amount only when health insurance is not provided.

### **Self Support Reserve**

Sometimes a parent earns so little that he or she is living at or near poverty. They have little financial capacity to make child support payments. SB 292 creates a two-prong test to determine the parent's ability to meet the child support obligation and maintain a modicum of self-support.

### **Increase the Minimum Support Order**

The minimum child support order is set at \$50/month (\$600/year), despite inflation and other cost-of-living increases. Senate Bill 292 increases this amount to \$80/month (\$960/year).

After Stockhausen presented SB 292 there were many questions. Dr. Alvin Jackson asked the financial impact of the bill for the state of Ohio. Dr. Jackson stresses the importance of numerical break downs of how the bill effects financials in Ohio. Dr. Jackson believes the bill can be presented stronger if it is quantifiable. Representative Weddington also feels the quantitative part is critical when in the trenches as a legislator. Representative Weddington expressed the importance of being specific in the dollar amount, why it's needed, and what does it do to help.

Chairman Jones states that this is a piece of legislation to enable fathers to make an investment in their child. However, the Commission voted not to full endorse pieces of legislation but support provisions in the bill that positively effect fathers and the well being of fathers. Chairman Jones asked if any legislators on the Council co-authored or co-sponsored the bill. Stockhausen unfortunately answered saying there are no legislators from the Council on the bill however, Senator Sykes signed on as a co-sponsor. Chairman Jones followed up with another question asking if the bill is solely from the Ohio Child Support Guidelines Advisory Council's 2009 recommendations or are there additional provisions that may be controversial. Stockhausen says the bill are based upon the Ohio Child Support Guidelines Advisory Council's 2009 recommendations and additional enhancements. Stockhausen will provide commissioner with a copy of a letter that was sent to Republican council members articulating the enhancements of the bill to further understand provisions. Commissioner Steve Killpack who sat on the Ohio Child Support Guidelines Advisory Council says the provisions support he recommendations and the bill can be enhanced if quantified. Commissioner Steve Killpack also says that fathers rights groups are against the bill and need to be educated about the positives in the bill.

On another note, Senator Miller suggested Director Robinson begin identifying legislators to serve on the Commission. Senator Miller mentioned Representatives Jay Hottinger and Cheryl Grossman as potential commissioners.

## **B. House Bill 349 Update**

Chairman Jones briefed the Commission on the progress of HB 349 since the last Commission meeting. Chairman Jones believes there will be no lame duck session. However, Senator Miller believes there will be a lame duck session because of appointments that need to complete. Chairman Jones asked Representative Weddington and Senator Miller what actions should be taken in order to get HB 349 above the black line for a vote. Senator Miller volunteered to give President Bill Harris a call and will ask Senator Smith to reach out as well.

### **C. Federal Grant for Asset Building for Financial Responsibility**

Commissioner Kimberly Dent informed the Commission on the awarded Asset Building for Financial Responsibility Grant received from the federal government in the amount of \$650,000. The Ohio Office of Child Support (OCS) and its primary partner, the Ohio Community Development Corporation (OCDC), (an Assets for Independence grantee), propose to develop a program with a two-pronged statewide and local approach that will improve the financial well-being of children across Ohio, with a particular focus on families living in urban poverty. The Ohio Commission on Fatherhood and the Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families (and the State Treasurer's Office?) will join OCS and OCDC in developing a statewide approach connecting low income non-custodial fathers to financial education and asset building programs offered by AFI grantees. The partners will cross train child support workers, fatherhood and family-serving practitioners, financial literacy providers and AFI staff on the child support system and its processes and the asset building services and tools available to low income families through the Assets for Independence program.

AFI programs have been underutilized by low income non-custodial fathers in Ohio. These fathers are often struggling to maintain stable employment, pay their child support, and stay actively involved in the lives of their children, typically tend to be wary of traditional financial systems and government agencies. Fatherhood providers who have established trusting relationships with non-custodial fathers will be key to bridging the barrier between child support agencies, AFI grantees and the targeted population. The approach will include a statewide summit to launch the initiative, training offerings for collaborative partners across the state. The initiative will be promoted through traditional media (print and web-based) and innovative new media (social networking platforms, text messaging and mobile web applications).

OCS and OCDC will partner with child support agencies and AFI grantees in Cincinnati and Cleveland to implement the local approach. The need for financial stability and asset building services is

particularly high in these two urban centers. Cleveland (where 42% of children live in poverty) and Cincinnati (where 36% of children live in poverty) have both consistently ranked among the top ten poorest cities in the country. Ohio is the only state in the union to have two cities among the top ten. The Cuyahoga and Hamilton County Child Support Enforcement Agencies (CSEAs) will target two groups of low income obligors 1.those who are current on their child support payments and 2. those who are in default on their child support orders and/or struggling with large arrearages. OCS and its partners will engage in a process and outcome evaluation of the program with these two groups of obligors against a number of objectives, including increased knowledge about and use of financial literacy and asset building services available in the community as well as child support order modifications and compromise and waiver of arrearages in targeted appropriate cases.

## **VI. Meeting Calendar**

Monica Mahoney presented the commission meeting dates for 2011. The meetings will continue to take place on Thursdays in the Lazarus Building but the time of the meetings will change to 10:00am-12:00pm instead of 11:00am-1:00pm.

## **VII. Announcements & New Business**

Director Robinson recognized Ms. Lavita Stokes, author of [A Father's Love](#)

**Next meeting February 3, 2010**

## **X. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.