MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES AND ENFORCEMENT

FOR THE STATE OF ALABAMA
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023
10:00 A.M.

ORIGINAL

THE ADVISORY COMMITIEE ON CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES AND ENFORCEMENT MEETING was held before Wendy Kendrick, Certified Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Alabama at Large, at 300 Dexter Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama, on Friday, February 10, 2023, commencing at 10:00 a.m.

## APPEARANCES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
PROFESSOR PENNY A. DAVIS, Chair
Adjunct Professor of Law
University of Alabama School of Law
MS. LATHESIA MCCLENNEY
Director
Child Support Enforcement Division
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Montgomery, Alabama
PROFESSOR J. BRIAN GRAY
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Culverhouse College of Commerce
The University of Alabama
Tuscaloosa, Alabama
MS. MELODY BALDWIN, Esquire
Fifth Judicial Circuit
District Attorney's Office
Child Support Division
Dadeville, Alabama
MS. KATIE STEINWINDER, Esquire
Private Practice Attorney
Montgomery, Alabama
MS. SHIRLEE BEACH
Morgan County
Department of Human Resources
Decatur, Alabama
MS. RACHEL KING, Esquire
Private Practice Attorney
Birmingham, Alabama
MS. RHONDA WILSON, Esquire
Department of Human Resources
Bessemer, Alabama

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APPEARANCES (continued)
MS. EMILY MILLS, Esquire Private Practice Attorney Gadsden, Alabama

MS. KINTISHA MATTHEWS, Esquire Private Practice Attorney Birmingham, Alabama

MS. HEATHER FANN, Esquire Legal Services of Alabama One Place Family Justice Center Birmingham, Alabama

OTHER APPEARANCES:
THE HONORABLE GREG COOK Associate Justice Supreme Court of Alabama Montgomery, Alabama

DR. JANE VENOHR (Via Zoom)
Center for Policy Research
Denver, Colorado
BOB MADDOX, Esquire
Staff Attorney, Legal Division
Alabama Administrative Office of Courts Montgomery, Alabama

STEPHANIE BLACKBURN
Central Staff Attorney
Supreme Court of Alabama
Montgomery, Alabama
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                    OTHER APPEARANCES CONTINUED -
    MS. LISA CLARK
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MS. VERNECIA HOWELL
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PROFESSOR DAVIS: Let me welcome everybody. We have a number of new members on our Committee which we certainly welcome.

THE COURT REPORTER: I need you to speak up a little bit.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: I need to speak up? Okay. And one of the things I was going to say is -- this is a Committee that has a court reporter. Wendy is our Court Reporter for today, and we need to speak up for her. And one thing that I don't do and didn't do was to introduce myself.

My name is Penny Davis, and I am the Chair of the Committee. The Court graciously provides us with the name tags which also helps our Committee -- our Court Reporter. But what we try to do to help her is to identify ourselves when we get started. I am the world's worst at doing that.

So, if you would, go ahead and identify yourself. Halfway through when

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you are talking, you can identify yourself if you remember that. So, again, we welcome Wendy as our Court Reporter. And, Wendy, anything you want to ask or instruct us other than speaking up and identifying ourselves?

THE COURT REPORTER: No, ma'am.
I think that's all. As long as I can hear you, I will be good.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: All right.
Great. Well, the next think I do want to do is -- do you need us to stop? Go ahead.

MR. MADDOX: Can we see if Dr.
Venohr can hear us and see us? Dr. Venohr, can you see and hear us?

DR. VENOHR: Yes.
MR. MADDOX: Yes.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yay. Thank you.

MR. MADDOX: We were just making sure.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: I shouldn't really say this in front of a Justice of
the Court. But the most important people in this building are not our Justices, but our IT people. And I tell the dean the same thing in the law school that he's not the most important person. So, giving examples of that.

All right. So, let's start to the right of Wendy. If you would, identify who you are if you are representing a group or if you are an attorney or judge or whatever your role is and also if you are new to the Committee, if you would, indicate that as well.

MS. MATTHEWS: Yes, ma'am. I'm sitting right next to you so I won't be too loud.

> My name is Kintisha Matthews.

I am an attorney here in Montgomery with Legal Services where I am housed at One Place Family Justice Center.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Thank you.
MS. WILSON: My name is Rhonda

Wilson. I am a new member. I am an attorney in Birmingham, but I practice out of the Bessemer office. And I am one of the DHR attorneys. And I have been doing child-support work for 12 years, and I am happy to be here.

MS. MCCLENNEY: Good morning.
Lathesia McClenney, Director of the Child Support Enforcement Division, with the Alabama Department of Human Resources. MS. BALDWIN: Melody Baldwin. And I work in the District Attorney's Office for the Fifth Circuit.

MS. STEINWINDER: Katie Steinwinder, and I am in private practice here in Montgomery.

MS. BLACKBURN: Stephanie
Blackburn, and I am the Court's liaison. I am with the Supreme Court Clerk's Office.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Again, I am Penny Davis, Chair of the Committee.

MR. MADDOX: Good morning. I am Bob Maddox. I am a Staff Attorney in the

Administrative Office of Courts here in the Judicial Building. I am also the AOC liaison to the Committee.

MS. FANN: Heather Fann. I am in private practice in Birmingham, and I am a new member.

MS. KING: Rachel King, private practice in Birmingham.

PROFESSOR GRAY: Good morning. I am Brian Gray. I am Professor Emeritus of Statistics at the University of Alabama.

MS. BEACH: I am Shirlee Beach. I am an employee of Morgan County DHR, and I represent the Alabama Child Support Association on this Committee.

HON. COOK: I am Greg Cook. I am a newly elected Justice in the Alabama Supreme Court, and I am now the liaison to this Committee. And the only comment I would have to say is that I understand this Committee has made a strong push towards transparency and to allow members of the public and anybody else who wants to say
something or provide input to our Committee to do that, and I want to continue that. That would be an emphasis that I would have.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Thank you.
MS. MILLS: I am Emily Mills. I am with the firm of Cusimano, Roberts, Mills \& Knowlton in Gadsden, Alabama. And I have been a DHR Child Support Attorney for over 20 years.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Thank you. And as Justice Cook indicated, we do invite and welcome any comments from the public. And so, I can kind of lean over and see members of the public.

So, if you would like to
introduce yourself, and then I am going to ask you if you would like to speak to the group at the end.

MS. CLARK: I am Lisa Clark. I am with Policy with DHR for Child Support, and I will not be commenting at the end.

MS. HOWELL: I am Vernecia

Howell. I am with DHR, as well, in the Policy Unit, and I will not have any comments. Thank you.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. Thank you both. And then I will ask that again in case a question comes to your mind as we go through.

We do have -- and I will mention this now, but we will also talk about it at the end. We also allow the public to respond in more than one way. And if they cannot attend, then we encourage them to send information.

And so, we do have a communication, a letter from a member of the public that I have seen so far today. And it was presented to the Committee, and we will talk about that at the end right before we do the public discussion.

And so, is there any other information that has come in last minute that you are aware of?

MS. BLACKBURN: No, ma'am.

MR. MADDOX: No, ma'am.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. So, we would have one comment from the public and, of course, we may have other members of the public to come in and join us. Am I speaking loud enough now?

THE COURT REPORTER: Yes.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. Good. So, I will ask Stephanie, do we have a quorum?

MS. BLACKBURN: I believe we do. It looks like we have 11 members here, so we have a quorum.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Great. (At which time there was a brief interruption.)

PROFESSOR DAVIS: All right. So, at this point, we would like for Bob to tell us about the notice of the meeting.

MR. MADDOX: Yes. Notice to all media outlets around the State was sent by email from the Administrative Office of Courts on January 5th, 2023, and allowed
the public to send in a response if they wanted to join the meeting by a separate email and also told them about the materials that are published on our website.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. Thank you. All right. Any questions about the public notice?
(No response).
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. The next
item of business is to talk about the transcript. Everybody has a received a copy of that. So, the question is: Are there any changes or corrections that anyone would like to bring to our attention?
(No response).
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. If not, do I have a motion to have that approved?

MS. STEINWINDER: I make a motion to approve, Katie Steinwinder.

MS. KING: I will second that, Rachel King.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. It has been approved and seconded. So, all in favor, just say "aye."
(Committee members saying
"aye").
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Opposed, nay?
(No response).
PROFESSOR DAVIS: All right. That has passed.

We have what I think will be a rather slim agenda compared to what we generally do. And one of the issues, the first one that we will be talking about, is a continuation of some issues that the Committee has discussed before. And I thought since we have a number of new Committee members that it would be beneficial to discuss the matters again. And I did not want and do not plan to have a vote on any of these issues because I didn't feel like it was really fair to ask new Committee members to be called upon to vote on important matters
like this, like the matters that we have. And this is the matter of process for the new members. What we do is we are a Committee that makes recommendations to the Supreme Court, and then they make determinations as to whether to approve or disapprove our recommendations or to send them back to us to work on them. We sent the end of last year one recommendation to the Court and several of our Committee members have worked on kind of cleaning it up. And so, it has been sent to the Court fairly recently. And so, they will make a determination as to whether they approve or disapprove.

And so, the process is that we just make recommendations and the Court makes the final decision as they do in everything else. And so, they will let us know what they do. And sometimes in the past, as I said, they will accept what we do and sometimes they will ask
some of us to come before the Court and ask questions, and then sometimes they will just approve or disapprove without us coming before the Court.

So, I wanted to kind of explain that in case the public -- when they read our transcripts they will understand that is the process we go through as well as informing the new members of the Committee.

So, with that being said, our first item on our agenda is a further report from Child Support for Multiple Children's Subcommittee. And the Chair is actually -- do we have two Chairs?

MR. MADDOX: No. I think it's just Judge Sherman.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Judge Sherman is the Chair, and he had a commitment he could not get out of. And so, Katie has agreed to discuss that. And you have the material in the packets in front of you.

> MS. STEINWINDER: Okay. I am not
a substitute for Judge Sherman, so I am going to probably be asking other members of the Subcommittee to weigh in on their recollection of our last meeting which was held by Zoom. And actually I think we do have a few people here who were on that. So, that would be --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Who was on the Committee? Just kind of raise your hand and --

MS. FANN: This -- like just --
MS. STEINWINDER: The Zoom.
MS. FANN: -- the week before last or something?

MS. STEINWINDER: Yeah.
MS. FANN: I was on it.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: So, some of our new people got to participate and that was good.

MR. MADDOX: We had several new members on there.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: That's great. Excuse me, Katie, for interrupting.

MS. STEINWINDER: No, that's okay.

So, what we would be doing is we would be adding a provision, not amending Rule 32. But we would add a provision to Rule 32 for instances where parties have a child support, whether it's a divorce or I guess it could be a modification, however they end up with a new child-support order, if they know at that time that they are going to have a child who ages out, obtains the age of 19, or -- I guess there wouldn't be another circumstance that we could predict -- within two years of the date of that order.

Then we are proposing a provision that allows for the entry of multiple orders. There would be -- the child-support order that would go into effect immediately after that final order and an alternative -- and I think it's a "may," Bob, not a "shall." We have been
down that road. So, a trial judge "may" enter multiple orders. And that second kind of order would be to address that eventuality when the child ages out within the two-year period. Have I said that correctly, Bob?

MR. MADDOX: Yes.
MS. STEINWINDER: All right. And so, there has been a lot of discussion about Worksheets and how we are going to do the IWOs. We have discussed whether to do it at the time of the final order and to have multiple IWOs in the final. And I know we have got a lot of DHR folks who can probably speak to that.

We have talked about confusion possibly in the Clerk's Office entering the wrong order. If we didn't have multiple IWOs entered at the time of the final order and we waited until that eventuality happened during that two-year period, who would it be incumbent upon to make sure the IWO was entered. If there

[^0]is a fee, who would pay the fee. We have had all of these conversations.

So, I think that where we came down was that it is a -- the trial court "may," not "shall," enter multiple orders. It's a two-year time period. There would be multiple 42s. And the language that would be added to Rule 32 would address the procedure.

Bob, help me -- and Heather, the other day, was it your understanding that we did not have a consensus as to how we were going to handle those Worksheets?

MS. FANN: The IWO part?
MS. STEINWINDER: Uh-huh (positive response).

MS. FANN: I think it was something we were going to continue to think on.

MS. STEINWINDER: And I guess
maybe we need everyone's input. I am interested in hearing what some of these

DHR staff members and attorneys might have to say about those IWO issues and when they should be entered.

Melody and I talked this morning about her thoughts.

MS. BALDWIN: And I -- we can't -- I mean, I -- and Lathesia would probably know this better than me, but you can't -and Shirlee. You can't load more than one at once in the system. There is not a particular system for them to pop up and say you have to do a new one.

MS. BEACH: Not at this point.
MS. BALDWIN: It usually happens when there is a change of employer that pops up in the system but not -- and that happens automatically, by the way.

MS. BEACH: We can set an alert to alert the worker that it's time to do to it.

MS. BALDWIN: But we can't load it.

MS. BEACH: But we can't put it
in there.
MS. BALDWIN: And then the worker would have to send something to us to file it with the court. Or --

MS. BEACH: Unless they're doing an administrative --

MS. BALDWIN: -- or -- I was about to say unless there's a -- it's okay for them to do it administrative.

MS. STEINWINDER: So, the discussion that we had I think really had come down as the Subcommittee was that it would be on the obligor, correct? The paying party would have the obligation to ensure that that is entered or that an action is taken through the court when it is time to enter that when the child has aged out or obtained the age of 19. And that language would be mandatory in each order in which multiple orders were entered at the time of the final order.

Now, I don't know if that makes sense. If the trial judge shows under
the "may" provision to enter multiple orders, the order would have some language reminding and nudging that party this is not going to happen automatically. You don't get the benefit of having somebody with a tickler system if you want to reduce your obligation. We are giving you the benefit of entering multiple orders, and you will have the obligation to ensure that that happens. PROFESSOR DAVIS: Let me interrupt for just a second. Because the public will be reading this transcript, will you explain what IWO is? MS. STEINWINDER: Okay. PROFESSOR DAVIS: It's a term we are familiar with but --

MS. STEINWINDER: Certainly.
It's an Income Withholding Order that would go into effect to reduce or to take out the amount of the child-support obligation from that -- from the paying party's paycheck. It goes immediately to -- I don't know. I
don't want to even -- it goes to DHR or to the receiving party.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right.
MS. STEINWINDER: And I think Heather had a --

MS. FANN: Yeah. My comment is it may help clarify that discussion too. And it's sort of in the form of a question. My understanding was that the judge could go ahead and say that's the purpose of the two 42s. All right. The obligation will change on this date. We know the child is going to turn 19 on this date.

So, the actual obligation will change. What will be hanging out there, if there is an IWO, is the termination or modification of the IWO.

I may have misunderstood that. But I think the modification of the support obligation is automatic, just not the IWO part?

MS. STEINWINDER: And the action

MS. FANN: Is that right?
MS. STEINWINDER: -- that the obligor would have. It would be incumbent upon the obligor to take the action of having that IWO amended.

MS. FANN: In the event an IWO was served, right.

And we talked about -- and again, I think this was one of the things that we were still playing with. I think a couple of the judges were in favor of like a -- within 45 days that we put the emphasis on the obligor to file that within 45 days of that 19th birthday.

And then we talked -- and I don't know how in the weeds we want to get today about it but just so everybody knows about, you know, if there is overpayment in the meantime because this is a process that takes some time giving a presumption of credit for that person who did what they were supposed to do under the Rules and through no fault of
their own ended up overpaying.
So, yeah, we -- yeah, I don't know how much -- but those were some of the ideas that we were contemplating and hoping for input on, I think, for, you know, how do we fine tune this to make it work and make it make sense.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Can I -- Since I was not part of that, I am going to play the role of the low common denominator that we call it anyway.

So, what we are talking about is let's say that Bob's the payor and he's paying in $\$ 100$ a month, and then it drops to $\$ 75$ because one of his children ages out. But for whatever reason, he doesn't file like he's supposed to. So, his company continues to take out \$100 even though the child-support order then changes to -- as of January 1, he only owes \$75.

So, the idea would be the \$25
that he's paying instead of the court
having to decide whether to give him credit for that, it would be determined to be an automatic credit.

MS. FANN: No presumption.
Because the judges want room in case there's arrearages or other issues, we wanted to leave judges room to --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: So, it would be a rebuttable presumption?

MS. FANN: A rebuttable presumption, yes.

MS. STEINWINDER: I was
interested in hearing what y'all had to say about the credit.

MS. BALDWIN: This is Melody
Baldwin. I have a question.
So, if he doesn't -- he or she
doesn't go in to file for the amended income totaling or notify DHR within the 45 days and they let it rock on for months, what does that mean for this credit you are talking about?

MS. FANN: Well, we were trying
to tie them down. And if you want the credit, then you need to follow the Rule. And I -- I don't know. I mean, I would think that our current child-support law that is in, you know -- I mean, that that would still be a discretionary thing for judges to deal with because people overpay. And, I mean, you know, we have some case law about overpayment of child support and all that kind of stuff.

MS. BEACH: The issue comes in for us -- This is Shirlee Beach. I'm sorry.

The issue comes in for us in
that if there is -- if there is one individual that owes support for a child and he doesn't owe support for any other children -- and understand I am talking about on our DHR system -- if he has past due support owed, then anything more than current support is going to go to satisfy that debt automatically. That happens automatically.

If he does owe -- or if he doesn't owe a debt and he has multiple cases, it will allocate to the other case. Anything he pays over the current support amount is going to allocate to any other cases he has in our system.

That's -- that's my concern --
MS. FANN: Well, I would think --
MS. BEACH: -- with the credit.
MS. FANN: -- that would be rebutting the presumption.

MS. BEACH: Okay. That's fine.
MS. FANN: Correct? I mean, I don't know. Y'all tell me.

MS. BEACH: If that counts, that's correct with me, yeah.

MS. FANN: It would seem to -that's exactly the kind of thing we were trying to -- in making it a presumption and not an automatic credit. We were contemplating that things like that might come into play.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: So, what would
happen if -- going back to Bob again. If Bob's \$25 that he -- he sends \$100 instead of DHR directly to me. So, it's over -MS. FANN: That's on him. He knows what his order says.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: So, if he does that, then I will -- and he comes back and later -- and doing the same thing with the other person that goes through y'all. So, he gets credit for the $\$ 25$ that he is sending extra to the other child that is over there, that goes through y'all. From me, he would not get credit. It would be a presumptive gift; is that correct? Because right now Bob gives --

MS. BEACH: That's what it seems like.

MS. FANN: I think so.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Because right now if Bob pays $\$ 500$ to me even though the court only orders \$100, our case law is such that --

MS. FANN: Right.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: -- it is
assumed that he is giving the extra money for that.

MS. FANN: Yeah, I think so.
Especially -- I mean, he knows -- if he knows his order says that it changes on this date but he sends more despite that -our worry was not so much that obviously --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right.
MS. FANN: -- because that --
PROFESSOR DAVIS: I'm just seeing
$\qquad$

MS. FANN: Yeah. But --
PROFESSOR DAVIS: I want the public to understand what the difference is.

MS. FANN: Sure.
MS. BALDWIN: Is that going to be -- This is Melody Baldwin.

Is that going to be viewed differently if it's an income withholding that's been issued through the Department administratively --

MS. BEACH: Uh-huh (positive response).

MS. BALDWIN: -- versus he's gone to the clerk and it's through the clerk. I mean, is that viewed differently under your presumption?

MS. FANN: Well, the presumption is for the judge. Assuming this gets back before the court and a judge is dealing with it, there is a presumption -- you know, and the judge, I would assume, sort out whether they wanted to give the credit or not. Is that your question?

MS. BALDWIN: Well, I just have -- and the reason I ask is I have scenarios that aren't the same facts but, for instance, I just had this yesterday.

The noncustodial parents' children started receiving Social Security Disability family assistance through the entitlement through his Social Security.

> Meanwhile, he had an income
withholding through the Department. He never notified the Department his children were getting this. Certainly the mother didn't. So, for however many months, he let that pay. Okay? Now he comes in to modify it or to terminate his income withholding. He's entitled to get that done.

The child-support order is
still in place. He just -- The family assistance pays in excess of that, so he's not going to have to make that current payment. That extra is still an entitlement of the child that doesn't go to credit. We all agree on that. That's case law. But he's now wanting credits for after the child turns 18 and stops getting that for the extra he's paid. Well, that mother has already spent that money to support that child. When that child gets 18, there is nothing between 18 and 19.

So, in this situation, the
mother will have already spent -- well, I say "mother" --

MS. STEINWINDER: Custodian.
MS. BALDWIN: -- because 98\% of the time it is --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Custodial parent.

MS. BALDWIN: Okay. So, she's already spent that full amount she has been getting to support the children, whether it's still just two, and now she's going to have to go with less because there is all these credits. And how much credits are we talking about? Does that mean that she's not going to be getting anything to continue to support the two that are left? That's just the circumstances I am thinking about.

Because I know with
allocation -- we're -- I think we are probably good on that. I mean, that is federal regulation.

MS. BEACH: Yes.

MS. BALDWIN: We can't get around that. The State can't change the law on that.

> MS. KING: And also -- Rachel

King.
How do we rectify that? If the court enters at a certain time that there is a sundown clause, that there is a new order that is going to be entered, so -and, you know, January 1st the child support is now ordered X.

So, come January 1st that order is entered. But you have an old active IWO that's -- so, now you have conflicting orders.

MS. BALDWIN: Right.
MS. KING: Whether somebody
changes or not, you still have two conflicting orders. I don't know how you can deal with that. I think that causes a lot of problems on that end.

MS. FANN: And we were trying to tackle that question of, can we have an IWO
that is -- the judge goes ahead and says, okay, this will be an amended IWO that is effective on this date. But I don't know that we have the infrastructure --

MS. KING: To do it.
MS. FANN: -- to do that without causing chaos. So, that was one of the reasons, I think, we left that question hanging -- and I'm sorry. I keep forgetting.

THE COURT REPORTER: That's okay. I know you now.

MS. FANN: Was because, you know, nobody in the room felt like the expert on how those processes work and how we needed to handle it.

MS. BALDWIN: This is Melody Baldwin.

Do we have anybody from a clerk's office here today? I know sometimes we do, because that would be great. But, anyway.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: I am going to
back up for a minute and primarily again for the public's benefit but also for a few of the new members that didn't get to participate.

What's prompted this question was -- or the issue was brought before us is from one of the judges, appellate judges and some other judges that talked to us. What we know is that the public -- if they have two children and they are paying $\$ 500$, they have -- they make the assumption that when the older child ages out, they can automatically cut that amount into half. And we know that that's not statistically how that's going to work with regard to the child-support enforcement. And so, what we are trying to do is figure out a way to alert the public -- that is one of the issues that we talked about -- is alert the public that they can't automatically make that -- they already should know that but they don't. But one of the reasons -- and
then the judges, of course, from the court's perspective, they don't want someone to have to have the expense of coming back in, you know, 18 months later or a year later and do the modification. So, there are several policies behind it that are really trying to help the public and this is the struggle.

So, I just wanted to put that on the record.

MS. STEINWINDER: And, Penny -Katie Steinwinder.

It might be helpful to say that
Judge Terry Moore sent a memo to the Committee in 2020, and he laid out different jurisdictions, how other States are addressing this very issue. And at the bottom of your memo, you have got part of the Georgia's statute that is cited. But there are several States in that memo. And I know that's available -- is it on alacourt.gov?

MR. MADDOX: Absolutely.

MS. STEINWINDER: Okay. It's one of the documents that's out there. And for the new members, it might also be helpful to know that all of our documents are out there.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: As well as the transcripts.

MS. STEINWINDER: As well as
transcripts. So, you can get on alacourt.gov and find pretty much anything.

MR. MADDOX: Back to 2004.
MS. STEINWINDER: Yeah. More than you ever wanted to know is out there.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: And the public can do the same thing.

MS. STEINWINDER: Absolutely.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: They have that option.

MS. STEINWINDER: And it's very helpful when you are researching some of these issues, but I think that is exactly where we were.

And the reason why Judge

Williams and Judge Sherman, who are on the Subcommittee, talked about some mandatory language in those orders if the judge chose the "may" and included the multiple orders to say to the noncustodial parent, the paying party, this is incumbent upon you to make this change.

So, you can kind of follow some of where all of that developed from, and then we got into the new Rule -- the new CS-42. This issue took a back burner; is that fair to say?

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right.
MS. STEINWINDER: And then once we got the new 42 voted out and the Court approved it, and we got rolling with that, we have revisited this issue.

So, there is a lot of
background information out there for the new members and everybody else to figure out where we are.

MR. MADDOX: Also, for the record
and for the benefit of the new members, the federal law -- I think it's 45-CFR-302.56
-- is that right?
MS. MCCLENNEY: You are in the ballpark, Bob.

MR. MADDOX: -- requires States to -- when discussing the Child-Support Guidelines, to post the materials on the internet, the roster of Committee members, the Guidelines, as well as the ending date of the current -- we are required to review the Child-Support Guidelines every four years, and that's what this Committee has been set up to do under the Supreme Court of Alabama Rule.

So, we are required to put that, and we have done it on our Administrative Office of Courts' website under Child-Support Guidelines, and then Child-Support Guidelines Review.

So, I just wanted to let the new members be aware that that is a requirement of the federal law which we
have to follow in order for State DHR to receive Title IV-D child-support monies.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Which is a lot of money.

MS. STEINWINDER: And another
thing -- Katie Steinwinder again.
Another thing that is helpful about that is that these memos change obviously as we come through time. And sometimes it's helpful to go back and see what changed and why, the rationale being a subsequent memo perhaps.

So, if you are trying to trace why we did something or how we arrived at something for the new members, I found that helpful, especially if you are going to participate in CLE and you want to be able to answer questions. Those documents are a world of help. And I may have gotten us totally off topic.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: No. No. I
did. And I should have said that before we started because it does kind of disrupt the
flow. But I think it's important for us and the public to be aware of that.

MS. FANN: I -- If I can, address
Rachel's point about the conflicting orders. I was thinking through that because that bugs me.

I think they might appear to be conflicting, but technically there is a difference. There is a child-support order. This is the amount of child support you are ordered to pay. And there is an income withholding order that orders an employer to direct funds in a certain way.

So, I don't think we would have a conflict in what the person is ordered to pay. We just have a procedural conflict in how it's collected.

MS. KING: It's still an order signed by the judge.

MS. FANN: No, I know.
MS. KING: But it's a --
MS. FANN: I think that order --

HON. COOK: It's a garnishment. MS. FANN: It's to the employer

MS. KING: Yeah.
MS. FANN: -- not to the obligor
is my point. So, it's -- that's where the credit comes in. I am ordered to pay this. I've paid that. And we did want to talk about -- somebody brought that up, one of the judges. Well, you know, mom's -- a lot of times it is mom is dependent on this money and has gotten it. But in this instance and this particular Rule change that we are talking about, mom is also aware that it is to change on such and such date.

So, you know, it -- and the --
you know, we want the IWO change to happen soon which is why we are contemplating a quick turnaround. And if it's within 45 days of the birthdate, then that -- I was presuming would be a full 90 days. That ought to be plenty of
time for an obligor to try to get to a courthouse.

But it also encourages that, okay, well, if you want a credit, then you need to act on this quick and not have somebody relying on the payments that were --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: So, I know this hasn't been set yet. If Bob doesn't do it within 45 days, is there anything punitive towards him?

MS. KING: Yeah. He's still getting withheld. And that's where I think the conflict is is because we have under law we are required to put in our -- judges are required to put in their final orders whether or not an income withholding order is being entered and served. And so, if it is entered and served and the judge has signed it, they have to match. If they don't, I think you have a problem on the judge's end. I think -- I think it creates an appealable issue at that point.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yeah. But I guess my question was: Yes, the withholding order is still in place.

MS. KING: The old one.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: The old one is in place, correct. And from the employer's standpoint, the only one --

MS. KING: Correct.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: -- that's in place. But whether he does it -- what difference is it from his perspective with the 45 days? Because, yes, this continues on whether he goes to court in 30 days or 50 days. Is there any punitive -- like, he's not precluded from going and getting credit for it or changing it. There is no --

MS. KING: No. But I think to Melody's comment, it could potentially be punitive to the custodial parent if they are then turned to -- you know, made to somehow pay back that money that they received or suddenly that noncustodial
parent gets a credit, and they are receiving less money. I mean, I do think there is a potential there for a punitive action towards the custodial parent.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: So, are you anticipating that when the court looks at it from the perspective of, it's a rebuttable presumption that he gets credit, if he sits on his right to go for a period of time, is that a consideration that the court would take -- is that what you are anticipating, the court would then say, okay, that is going to more adversely impact the child because they waited so long that the reality is that child is not going to have any resources from the mom because they have already spent that money, and there is a year from -- I think the example y'all gave from 18 to 19 -- the mother may not be receiving any money.

MS. FANN: I think, though, that it's important to remember that this is something that already exists in the law.

People can petition for a retroactive child-support modification. So, we are not talking about something that is wildly different than anything that we already do. I mean, if somebody wanted to -- if he wanted to file the amended income withholding, but he could also just file a petition for modification and ask for a retroactive modification and ask for a credit. You know, I mean, all of that is something -- this is not a stranger to what we are doing.

MS. BEACH: I'm sorry. Is
retroactive downward modification allowed?
MS. FANN: Yes.
MS. BEACH: I didn't -- I didn't know that we did retroactive downward --

MS. BALDWIN: That's only for --
MS. BEACH: -- modifications.
MS. BALDWIN: -- data filing.
MS. FANN: Right. That's what
I'm saying.
MS. BEACH: I've got --

MS. FANN: We already have something where somebody would have an obligation --

THE COURT REPORTER: I need one person at a time, please.

MS. KING: But I think what Melody was saying in this situation -- this is automatic because it's a court order. It's not going to be --

MS. BEACH: Well -- that would be considered --

MS. KING: Because that at least puts the person on notice.

MS. BEACH: But this does too.
THE COURT REPORTER: Okay.
MS. KING: You're taking this --
MR. MADDOX: Time out.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Time out.
THE COURT REPORTER: Thank you. (Off-the-record discussion was held.)

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Let's put the ball back in Rachel's court for a minute.

MS. KING: Well, I mean, I am just -- I'm thinking -- and I guess Melody -- you know, I think Heather and I in particular are coming from more of a domestic relations court standpoint.
This is -- so, they're vastly
different. And I think to overlook that is being disingenuous. And so, from your standpoint of those clients, I think it, you know, goes along to what you were saying in public interest, people don't know that they can't just divide it in half. In the same instance, they don't know that just because there is this court order but there is another court order that says that he has to pay $\$ 500$ a month, the IWO, and it's been being withheld. All of a sudden they are going to be popped because dad or noncustodial parent comes back and says, wait a second, I had an old order from a year ago, I am due a credit.

I just think in your situation
it's going to have a much greater impact.
MS. BALDWIN: This is Melody Baldwin again. And if he waits until that child is 19 --

MS. KING: Oh, it would be -yes.

MS. BALDWIN: -- that mother -MS. KING: Is done.

MS. BALDWIN: He is going to be asking to have it paid back, and she has already spent that money. And I keep saying "he" and "she," but that's the circumstances though that --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Custodial and noncustodial.

MS. BALDWIN: Right. I mean, right. Then you have got a custodial parent who is now being asked and perhaps being required to pay back --

MS. KING: To reimburse.
MS. BALDWIN: -- thousands of dollars.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Emily wanted to
speak.
MS. MILLS: Emily Mills. I think this happens now as you were saying. Any time you have a modification, you have to do an amended income withholding order. And there can be delays with an income withholding order being issued. Even it it's simultaneously issued, the employer has a process through their HR, so it can be 60 or 90 days. If the order is issued, and then you have another two months before the IWO gets done for whatever reason and then it gets to their employer, you can have six months delay in the modification whether it's up or down.

And so, I don't -- like you were saying, I don't think that the issue itself is an issue.

MS. KING: No. But also, I think the other issue here is that we are overlooking the fact that right now retroactive from the date of filing is discretionary. It's not mandatory. What
we are proposing here would be automatic.
MS. FANN: If the judge orders it that way.

MS. KING: Correct. Well, that's what we are assuming. We are talking about the assumption of they've changed it, and here is a new IWO that is just waiting for somebody at some point in time to enter with a new employer if you've changed jobs or whatever. But this is your new amount for a year-and-a-half from now.

MS. FANN: Right. I guess what I was getting to is -- and this is Heather Fann again.

What I was getting to is, there is still discretion both in whether the judge enters a second 42, and there is discretion in whether the judge later grants any kind of credit. And all of that would have to be something that the judge decides. So, there is --

MS. KING: That is decided
instantly. And so, you are creating more
issues down the road that I thought we were trying to avoid by doing this. We are trying to keep people from having to go back to court, but now we are saying that if we create this issue of credit, they are going to have to go back to court to have a judge enter that.

So, I don't think we are accomplishing what we are trying to do. MS. MATTHEWS: Kintisha Matthews. And correct me if I am wrong, I think one of the issues that Judge Williams had talked about on the Subcommittee was that very issue about low-income mothers receiving money that they had spent and things like that. And I think that's how we got to the word "presumption." That it's not an automatic credit, that you don't automatically get a credit.

And that's how we also got to the term about the timeframe. You don't get to get these credits if you sit on your behind and say, hey, a year later I

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am due this money. It's within a certain timeframe.

MS. KING: But you have an order that says you are.

MS. MATTHEWS: But, no, the order does not say -- and I think that's why it was also mentioned that we put it in the comments. The order will not say, hey, you are automatically due these things. I think that's how we got to the order "it's a presumption," meaning that, hey, the judge can decide to give this credit if it's due. But you don't get to just sit and say, hey, 45 days from now a year later I want to do this. For that very reason that I think Judge Williams was saying, hey, we will have mothers -- we will have custodial parents because I do deal with some. We will have custodial parents who will not be able to pay this money back.

So, I think that was -- and
correct me if I am wrong -- on the Subcommittee, that that was part of what
we discussed and how we got to
presumption, that it wasn't going to be automatic. But correct me if I am wrong.

MS. STEINWINDER: Katie Steinwinder.

I think that Judge Williams' thoughts were that it should be less punitive on the party receiving and in need perhaps on that lower end and more punitive on the obligor parent to take an action or to suffer consequence. Is that your recollection?

MS. MATTHEWS: Correct.
MS. STEINWINDER: Okay.
MS. BALDWIN: This is Melody Baldwin again.

I mean -- and I am not saying add any language. But if we are going to do -- and I understand the premise of doing this and saving a modification. I mean, that makes complete sense because you are talking two years. I mean, it is crazy to have to file a modification, pay
that filing fee, especially if you are a private litigant and -- of course, DHR pays filing fees too. Most people don't know that, but we do.

And so, I agree with the premise of doing this. And I -- I don't have a problem with it. I am supposed to be on the Subcommittee, but I am never available for the meeting. But I just want to be able to avoid this situation where we have got a custodial parent who -- because I have seen those. I have seen them with Social Security -- Social Security will go after the custodial parent. I don't want that to happen. I've seen businesses get liens filed on them that the custodial parent was on a bank account with their mother, and they went to try to get it back.
So, I don't want any
overpayment -- quote, unquote,
"overpayment" to be punitive to the custodial parent who honestly had --

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 800.397.5590 www.boggsreporters.comMS. BLACKBURN: Because the other person -- (inaudible).

THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry.
I didn't get that.
MS. BLACKBURN: I'm sorry.
Because the other person sat on their rights.

MS. BALDWIN: That's right. So, if we could make it -- and I am not saying not have it presumptive, because there might be circumstances where in 45 days they couldn't. You know, we have talked about these kind of things before. Maybe they were in the hospital with COVID or -you know, and they couldn't.

But maybe have some language in there that makes it clear to a court that maybe -- if they just simply didn't do it, that it's a gift just like we do with

MS. BEACH: Exactly. I like that.

MS. BALDWIN: Just like we do
with the entitlements, you know, and not have this problem on the custodial parent. I just want to avoid that if that --

MS. BEACH: And it takes --
MS. BALDWIN: -- is at all
possible.
MS. BEACH: I'm sorry. Shirlee Beach.

That it basically takes effect once the withholding order is issued -MS. BALDWIN: Right.

MS. BEACH: -- the second
withholding order is issued --
MS. BALDWIN: That's right.
MS. BEACH: -- rather than it's
automatic at the time that the child reaches a certain age, more that it's --

MS. KING: I think that is --
MS. BEACH: -- when the
withholding order is issued.
MS. BALDWIN: Right.
MS. BEACH: Is that --
MS. BALDWIN: That's right.

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MS. BEACH: Okay.
MS. BALDWIN: And I think we have actually said that before. I just don't know that it's reflected on what's on the paper here.

MS. FANN: Are we -- So, is this a -- and by the way, I think everybody on the Subcommittee -- if we haven't been clear, I think we should be clear. This is not -- nobody is asking for a vote --

MS. BALDWIN: Right.
MS. FANN: -- on this today or anything. We -- there is a reason we are not done with it. And this discussion is it.

But y'all are proposing that the child-support obligation not change until the income withholding order changes?

MS. WILSON: Correct.
MS. KING: I think you have to
otherwise you're --
MS. WILSON: Rhonda Wilson.

That's what I -- I think I was hearing people saying. But what I was thinking about is why not let the order be -- the order is not automatic. It's like this is -- the order will change upon motion because you are still trying to have them not to come to court.

So, say, your obligation is going to be the same; however, we already have something to change it. And if you file a motion to ask for the new order without the emancipated child, if you filed a motion and asked that that new IWO and order be done, it seems like that would kind of resolve some of the issues.

And then some other provision about if you -- you know, you can't just wait and wait and then say a year later. And I think it's just too many problems with it being automatic.

MS. FANN: Right. The problem with what you are proposing is that there is no jurisdiction. You can't just file a
motion. You have to file a petition to invoke the court's jurisdiction.

MS. KING: But we do allow for an affidavit to be filed. We want it --

MS. WILSON: Right. So, I was thinking about the affidavit of termination of parental --

MS. KING: So, we could figure out a way to loophole that.

MS. WILSON: Right.
MS. BEACH: It is. And do it --
MS. KING: That's my big thing. Because I think if you haven't -- I am just thinking from the standpoint of appeals from the obligors. They are saying I have an order right here --

MS. BEACH: Yeah.
MS. KING: -- that says that my income was due to be changed. You can say all you want in this language that it's up to the judge, but if the order says that this child support -- his or her child-support obligation changes, that's a
court order. I mean, none of us can change it.

MS. WILSON: Rhonda Wilson.
I guess you have to go back to -- I guess don't have them come to court but maybe be similar to the affidavit for termination of income withholding order. They do have to file a petition. And a lot of times if they don't owe anything or something like that -- a lot of times people who are owing, the obligor, they don't show up to court for them.

MS. BEACH: Yeah.
MS. WILSON: And, you know, we do what we need to do in regards to terminating, whether we terminate or don't terminate based on whether they owe arrears or not still. But I mean, I think that would be something -- I mean, you still would accomplish them not having to physically come to court and redo the forms, but they still have to incur some kind of costs. And, I mean, we are not
talking about $\$ 500$. And I understand that $\$ 102$ can be a lot for somebody. But I think that would cut down perhaps on some of the issues.

MR. MADDOX: This is Bob Maddox.
I think the filing fee is only like $\$ 30$.

MS. WILSON: Oh, okay. Okay.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Ms. Matthews had her hand up.

MS. MATTHEWS: Oh, it's been addressed. I was going to say that --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay.
MS. MATTHEWS: When we talked about the petition and things like that, when they were saying just file a motion, I was like, no, we already have a final order so we can't just file a motion. But, yes.

MS. BALDWIN: This is Melody Baldwin again.

Would it be possible, Rachel -or is there a problem, if you know, with a contingency order contingent upon them
filing the new form for the amended IWO?
MS. KING: To me, it would make it a nonfinal order.

MS. BALDWIN: Well, that's true because it's contingent on an action by the obligor.

MS. KING: Yeah.
MS. BALDWIN: But they don't have to do anything other than pay if there is a fee, a small fee, they don't even have to have new counsel to file that form.

MS. WILSON: Right.
MS. KING: Right. I think that goes back to what Rhonda was saying, yeah.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Let me ask you a question. This is a different approach.

If we leave it discretionary, at the court's discretion, but if they do enter the order, then it becomes effective. But also say that the person that has 45 days or whatever timeframe you want to file and anything that -- if they don't file or change anything beyond
that amount is treated as a gift just as any overpayment. And so, then you wouldn't be worried about credit, but you could write in perhaps the presumption that it was a gift, and then let the other -- if they want to come and litigate why it shouldn't be, they could. MS. BALDWIN: A presumption as to why it isn't a gift?

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yeah. Or just make it a gift. I mean, if want to say automatically if you -- obligor, if you don't go in, then anything that you allow that IWO to continue to be in place, then that will be treated that extra $\$ 25$, in my scenario, will be treated as the same way we treat any other overpayment from a noncustodial parent or parent for the child.

MS. STEINWINDER: Katie Steinwinder.

But then that presumptive gift in Shirlee's scenario goes to another
child in another case possibly.
MS. BEACH: Uh-huh (positive response).

MS. STEINWINDER: And I guess I am going to throw this out there, and I do not mean to cause a problem. But does anyone have a concern that this is somehow setting up a reversionary clause --

MS. KING: Yes.
MS. STEINWINDER: -- that we have said is void and not voidable --

MS. KING: Yes.
MS. WILSON: Yes.
MS. STEINWINDER: -- because it's impossible to predict the best interest of the child at a future date? That -- I just think we need to hash that one out.

MS. BEACH: This is Shirlee
Beach.
Also a very basic thing that
may or may not come up a lot -- I think
it would in our cases -- is the income of both parties in a two-year period. With
the clients that we work with, it changes a lot in two years.

So, we may be in a position to where we are having to file a modification anyway. That's a possibility.

MS. WILSON: Rhonda Wilson.
And I was looking at the Georgia one, and they did kind of address that one in their statute. And they said a final order entered pursuant to this paragraph shall not preclude a petition for modification.

MS . BEACH: Sure.
MS. WILSON: So, that kind of, I think, would address what you are talking about. I mean, that's true. Their incomes could wildly vary. But I think this is saying, you know, if you still want a modification, you could.

MS. KING: This is Rachel King.
I just have a question for someone who is on the Subcommittee. Have
any of the other States that have codified this been attacked from a due process standpoint? I mean, have we had a statute that comes down and then we have a lawsuit that says, no, you can't do this because you are depriving due process by it? I just don't -- if we're saying it's a gift, can we say that?

MS. FANN: I think the goal -Anybody else on the Subcommittee is welcome to disagree.

But I think the goal of the Subcommittee -- and this is Heather again -- was not to change any of the existing law about credits and retroactive support obligations and -you know, all of the things that are currently in place, presumption of gifts included. I don't think we were trying to do that. I think what we were trying to do is put a carrot out there for obligors that, look, if it's not your fault, if you came here quickly and tried
to get this done, and it's not your fault that there is a processing delay, then we are going to presume that you did everything you were supposed to do and, therefore, you are due the change that the court order contemplated.

So, I don't think -- you know, I think we can just be very careful in whatever language we utilize to make sure that we are acknowledging all of the systems that are already in place would remain in place. We are just really trying to get a -- and I don't know. I am sure it's very different for DHR cases. But in our private practice, quite frankly, I am sure Rachel has done it. We do it all the time. We say you know what, this child is aging out in four months. It's ridiculous for us to come back. Our judges maybe shouldn't sign these because they are, you know, proactive modifications and technically they are not supposed to.

But really, I mean, what we are trying to do is address those cases where who wants to have to pay a lawyer another \$1,000 plus filing fees and whatever and run all of these forms again that we can run right now while we are all sitting in here and have everyone understand -- and to your point about due process -- have everyone understand at the time they are doing it.

So, if I want to make an argument that, you know what, Judge, no, I have a child with special needs that we are still investigating, and I'm not sure that this child is not going to need Brewington support. And, you know, a judge certainly has the discretion under what we are proposing to say, you know what, I'm just not going to do this second 42 at all for this case.

So, I think there is -- the goal was to leave room for all of the kinds of concerns that everybody is --
and I'm not saying there is not still work to do on drafting and phrasing. But I think we are all in the same mind, and that's that nobody is trying to put an upheaval on all of this. We are just trying to address these sort of circumstances where everybody knows this is coming. Everybody knows this -- you know, this child -- and if something happens and the child passes away or something, then, you know, that's a whole separate issue that is already addressed under the law.

But if the passage of time is the only thing, you know, that stands between these folks and their next resolution, I appreciate that it is something that Judge Moore wanted to address.

HON. COOK: So, this is Greg Cook.

I would like a one-on-one tutorial on IWOs. In other words, number
one, do they normally expire by their terms or can you make them expire by their terms? First question: Do they expire by their terms?

MS. BALDWIN: No. You have to file the affidavit.

HON. COOK: They are just
forever? IWOs are forever?
MS. FANN: Until they are modified.

MS. KING: Or terminated.
MS. WILSON: Or terminated.
HON. COOK: Good.
MS. FANN: Or somebody changes jobs and they're --

HON. COOK: So, you want to come back and modify it. What's the normal procedure to modify an IWO?

MS. FANN: Petition to modify.
HON. COOK: Petition. And how much is the filing for a modification?

MS. KING: \$300 usually.
HON. COOK: \$300?

MS. FANN: You have to modify the order.

MS. KING: The support order. The original order, which is what we were saying is, if the judge is entering an order now, he or she is also effectively entering a sundown order to say effective January 1st when the second child ages -or the first child ages out, this will be the new order of support.

HON. COOK: The underlying order of the judge that issued an IWO --

MS. KING: Correct.
HON. COOK: -- can say the child support for the older son ends when he in turns --

MS. KING: That's what this is proposing.

MS. FANN: Currently your child turns 19 and you want your child support to change, you have to pay a $\$ 300$ or so filing fee, file a petition, wait for a judge to Rule.

HON. COOK: It's not just the IWO that you have to modify. You have to modify the underlying --

MS. KING: Yes.
HON. COOK: -- child-support order now.

MS. FANN: Right.
MS. KING: Which is what you still will be doing.

HON. COOK: Uh-huh (positive response). And the underlying --

MS. KING: Just perspectively.
HON. COOK: And the child-support order today you can't put a sundown provision in it?

MS. KING: Not technically, no.
MS. FANN: The general idea is you don't know what a child's situation is until the moment of the filing or whatever.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Child support is never final. It's a final order, but it's always modifiable. And so, that was what -- I think it was maybe Rhonda or one
of the ladies over here mentioned that. We want to make sure that even though you have this other order that will come into play at a certain time but that does not preclude -- or maybe it was Shirlee. I don't remember. Somebody said that the intervening events that can cause the child support -- the application of the Guidelines to make the amounts go up or down, that is still in play.

So, that's good for the public to hear your comments.

HON. COOK: Yeah. Would your proposal change the $\$ 300$ filing fee that you have to make?

MS. FANN: Yes.
MS. KING: You wouldn't have to pay it because there would already be another order in place.

MS. FANN: The new child support has already been ordered. We just have this dangling issue of the IWO still has the old order. And we don't have a system
for a second IWO or an automatic changing of the IWO.

HON. COOK: So, let's say I don't get an IWO when the original child-support order goes out and I need it, I have to go back to court to get it. Do I have to pay $\$ 300$ then?

MS. KING: No.
MS. BALDWIN: No.
MS. FANN: There's a clerk fee, a minor -- what is it, 30 -- somebody said 30 earlier. There is sort of a minor fee to -- The IWO is always supposed to be entered. It does not always have to be served.

So, a lot of our folks in private practice privately pay and nobody else is involved. And so, in that situation where Bob was sending $\$ 100$, even though Bob knew he didn't owe \$100, I'm not so worried about Bob. Right?

But, you know, the complication comes in this sort of hiccup of things
people can't control or couldn't.
HON. COOK: But of course --
MS. FANN: -- immediately.
HON. COOK: -- in your scenario
Bob knows that $\$ 100$ is being pulled from his paycheck --

MS. FANN: Right.
HON. COOK: -- you know.
MS. FANN: And he knows that too. And if he doesn't want to give it as a gift, that's what we were trying to say, all right, then, you don't want it to be a gift --

MS. KING: Change it.
MS. FANN: -- change it. Get there quickly and change it so that somebody else is not relying on -- you're not changing it or whatever.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: This is Penny Davis.

Earlier on in our discussion, we wanted to make sure that the burden for changing the withholding order did
not fall on the court or the clerk's office of the court to send that out. We felt like the appropriate party would be the obligor, the paying parent, because they would have the incentive. They would have skin in the game that they should want to do that.

HON. COOK: But we would -- the child-support order would already have sundown language in it.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yes. HON. COOK: You would be just changing the IWO?

PROFESSOR DAVIS: If the trial
court chose discretionary. If the trial court chose to do that, then they could include that.

MS. FANN: So, the natural
corollary is termination of support when there is only one child. We don't -technically what happens when there is no IWO is, you know, Bob and I have a child and Bob stops paying child support and the
child turns 19, I am not going to complain about it because I am wasting my money because there is no longer a minor child, right?

So, it sort of naturally occurs
there. It doesn't naturally occur when there is multiple children and someone ages out. That's what we are getting at. PROFESSOR DAVIS: Well, the -MS. KING: Or when there is an IWO in place for that one child because it keeps drafting it out of your paycheck unless or until you take the affirmative action to have it terminated.

MS. FANN: So, I think Rachel has
got a really good -- I don't know if you meant it as an explicit suggestion, but I think it is a good suggestion.

Similar thing, it's like you file an affidavit saying, hey, my child support has changed as effective whatever. I don't know if we have a form. I hate to admit I don't even know.

MS. KING: We have --
MS. FANN: I tell people to call
the clerk and figure it out.
MS. BEACH: There is an affidavit.

MS. FANN: But if we had an affidavit that was for this circumstance that said, you know, pursuant to the order of X date, my child support is to be changed on $Y$ date and, therefore, I am asking for -- one of the suggestions I made and I made it, you know, hesitantly because I know it can create some confusion was -that we could enter as an exhibit a proposed amended IWO, that that obligor could just then take -- it wouldn't be entered by the clerk. It would just be part of the paperwork so that they don't have to reinvent the wheel, but that he could then take and say, okay, this is now what the new IWO should be.

MR. MADDOX: When the original case order is issued, you have a backup
order, and then you have a backup income withholding order as well --

MS. FANN: Right.
MR. MADDOX: -- at the same time.
MS. FANN: Yeah. The same as you got --

MS. BEACH: Would the second withholding order not be viewed as an amended withholding order anyway? I mean, is that not how it would be --

MS. KING: It would have to be amended. It's not an original.

MS. FANN: It would except we are not doing anything with it at the time that we are creating it. So, the idea was Bob takes -- when that, you know, 20 days before the child turns 19, oh, I need to go get this taken care of. I already have this paper. I don't have to go see a lawyer and ask a question or figure this out. I already have this paper, and I just take this to the clerk and they say we can even do the affidavit, you know, both of
these things and turn these in and pay my \$30 and that process is started, and I am done.

HON. COOK: So, another dumb question. Why can't the IWO that is issued initially have a sundown provision in it for half or a third or whatever it is going to be? If the underlying child-support order says that, why can't the IWO have a step-down in it?

MS. KING: Well, because I think you are assuming -- you're pulling in a third-party employer.

MS. WILSON: Right.
HON. COOK: Right.
MS. KING: It's important to them

HON. COOK: It is.
MS. KING: -- to not only withhold it but then to send it somewhere. So, that's a lot of faith in an employer.

HON. COOK: It is.
MS. BEACH: It's also a federal
form. I don't know if has that provision in it.

HON. COOK: There we go.
MS. FANN: We asked that -- that was going to be the answer I told you. My understanding from the Committee was that we can't create a new income withholding order that is just for this circumstance.

MR. MADDOX: For the benefit of the new members, that is another federal law requirement. We have to use these standardized IWOs.

HON. COOK: Yeah, got it.
MS. STEINWINDER: Katie
Steinwinder.
And I think the choices on an IWO are amended to terminate or the initial, and that's it, right?

MS. WILSON: Uh-huh (positive response) •

MS. BEACH: Right. Correct.
MS. STEINWINDER: I mean, those are your choices.

And I wanted to point out in response to a question that Justice Cook had a few minutes ago. On page three of that memo that's in our packets, that proposed comment page to Rule 32, the last sentence of the second paragraph says the obligor parent should follow the procedure required to file an amended IWO.

Justice Cook, I understand that you had a question as to what if there was not an IWO initially, and I think we would need to add some language to that that says what would cause an IWO to be entered.

MS. FANN: Entered or amended. MS. STEINWINDER: Right. We just need to add some language there. And I just want to make sure everybody understands -- I may be looking at it from an elementary viewpoint. But there will be two CS-42s, right? That's what would be entered at the time of the final order, not
necessarily two IWOs. That is something we have discussed on and off, but what we have all agreed on I think the whole time is that there would be two CS-42s.

And I don't know if that affects, Rachel, your position on -- that there is an order and a non -- that's -I don't know if there is a nuance there.

HON. COOK: Okay. I'm sorry. What's a CS-42?

MS. FANN: The calculation form.

MS. STEINWINDER: The calculation.

MS. FANN: It's a formula form where we figure the support. And importantly, that is not in and of itself an order. That is the calculation. A judge can deviate --

MS. KING: It's a calculation.
MS. FANN: Right. A judge can deviate from that number. So, it is not on its own an order. The judge still decides in a trial case how much the child support
should be. That's just the form we are required to fill out to calculate it.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Well, these have been excellent questions. And I think that this will help inform the Subcommittee as they go back and reconsider things.

And let me encourage anyone in the public, both present and also anyone who reads the transcript, if you have any suggestions related to this topic, please send them. There is an address on the website that Bob mentioned earlier, the AOC website. And the Committee certainly would encourage you to do that and the Subcommittee would appreciate that.

So, obviously that is an
important topic. Again, trying to serve and balance the public's interest with the paying parent -- the receiving parent but keeping the child in the minds of the Committee. Most importantly, we're to make sure the children's needs are being met .

At this juncture, we have Jane Venohr standing by. So, we will let her present -- if you will look at your agenda, the second item is relating to further discussion of non-parent custodial income calculation of child support and daycare issue rates.

Now, Jennifer is not here. She has been exposed to COVID and, in an abundance of caution, she is not joining us today, which we appreciate her consideration for our safety as well as concerns, and we hope she does well and everyone else does well.

So, we will focus more on what Jane is going to talk about and go from there.

So, Dr. Venohr, would you introduce yourself and also tell the new Committee members the company that you work for.

DR. VENOHR: Hello, there. Thank you. I am Dr. Jane Venohr. I am an
economist with Center for Policy Research. We are based in Denver. We are a nonprofit organization that provides evaluation and technical assistance to States on various issues.

We have been working on State Child-Support Guidelines since 2007. We have assisted about 30 States. Right now we are working with the Federal Office of Child Support on their new Save Center which will serve about 12 grantees that are doing innovations on getting safe child support to victims of domestic violence.

Can you hear me okay?
MR. MADDOX: Can you speak up a little, just a little.

DR. VENOHR: Okay. So -- and welcome to the new members. Can you hear me better now?

PROFESSOR DAVIS: A little, tad.
DR. VENOHR: It's a little what?
PROFESSOR DAVIS: We can hear you
a little bit better. If you increase the volume just a little bit, it would be helpful. Bob has worked it on our end.

DR. VENOHR: Let me see if I can change my settings at all.

So, in any event, there was a question the last time about -- I'm sorry. I should back up a little bit.

We have expertise in other issues relating to Child-Support Guidelines. And so, we were asked to look into how States calculate support in non-parent custodial cases. And there was interest in the questions that are posed in the middle of that memo. These were the questions that were posed. One is: Should the non-parent custodian's income be considered in the calculation essentially?

And the second -- and the third one question is essentially if the non-parent custodial parent's income be excluded, what do you -- do you use
another parent's income? Say, that the child has been removed from the home of the mother and the child support is being sought by the mother, what do you do if you don't have information about the father is essentially what the two other questions have to do.

And so, what we did was we reviewed 16 States, namely, the ones that are bordering Alabama and then other States where we knew this was an issue. And we have addressed this issue in some other States but have never done a consensus State-by-State in-depth monitoring. And we knew that not all States address this issue, specifically with calculations, because in income shares, you have usually the mother's income and the father's income. And then obviously you use the Child-Support Schedule, and you prorate that Child-Support Schedule amount between the parents and the calculation of support.

And we also had some contact with some States in passing, and we asked how they did it. And those States were California, Georgia, Kentucky and West Virginia.

So, if you look at the matrix at the end -- and you don't have to flip there right now -- that will show you each State that we reviewed. And you can look at their precise provisions. But on the second page of the memo, we have a summary of what we found for those 16 States. Only four of those States -Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota and Tennessee -- address the non-parent custodian cases in their Guidelines. They specifically mention that type of case in their Child-Support Guidelines. Another of those three States had how to calculate it, you know, whose parent -- whose income to consider but it wasn't in the Guidelines. It was in another part, a statute. In Iowa and

Colorado, it was in the statutes that guide their administrative process or their child-support program. In Florida it was actually in their child-welfare statutes, but they did address it. Among the seven States that addressed those issues, it's important to know that all of them had income shares. So, there is a consideration of two parents' income. And none of them considered the income of the non-parent custodian. And all of the States that we talked to, they also said that they never considered the income of the non-parent custodian except Kentucky. They weren't sure about some of their judges.

But in Georgia, even though
there are some variation in how they
treat the parents' income that they considered, they specifically say that they never considered the income of a non-parent custodian.

And then as far as whether the

States considered both parents' income in the calculation of support, that varied significantly from State to State.

Arkansas and Tennessee have provisions that say that if you have both parents' income, if you know them both, then use both of them. But if you don't, only use the income of the parent for whom you are establishing support. So, if it's just the mother and you don't have the income of the father, don't use it.

In Colorado and Iowa and Florida, they explicitly say all to use two parents' incomes and that they -- if you don't know the income of the other parent at the time, then you should impute it and use their Rules on income imputation which are pretty prescriptive in these States.

So, there are calculations of support using two parents' incomes in Colorado, Iowa and Florida.

Minnesota is the only State
that specifically says just use that parent's income for whom you have it or for whom support is being established. Even if you have both parents' incomes -let's say that the child has been removed from the home of the mother and the father and the mother and the father are still intact, then Minnesota says you calculate support with the mother assuming that's her only income, that's the only parent's income. And then for the father, you only calculate it using the father's income.

In Georgia, they don't specify it. And their court liaison there says that it varies from judge to judge as far as whether they impute income to the other parent. You know, say that an order is being established against the mother whether they impute income for the father in the child-support calculation, and that it does vary from court to court.

Additionally, there is another provision in Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee that provide for the consideration on the non-parent's custodian's childcare and other add-ons. So, you know how we include that in Alabama in the Worksheet. So, you can include that for the -- what the non-parent custodian incurs. Say they incur $\$ 200$ a month in childcare, then that could be calculated in that child-support calculation.

And you can see that in the Tennessee Worksheet, and you don't have to scroll to it. It has a third column for the non-parent custodian. And that third column is just to get at that childcare expense or those other add-ons. It's not because they are going to prorate the basic obligation from the Schedule between the parents and non-parent caretaker.

So, specifically the answers to
the questions that were asked here: One is that the non-parent custodian's income isn't ever used except for Kentucky thinks it might be used by some judges, but they are leaning toward developing a policy where they would exclude it.

And then the second question is whether there -- the parent from whom support is being sought, whether it's $100 \%$ of their economic responsibility, that table amount. And that's true in Minnesota. It's true in Arkansas and Tennessee only if they have -- only if they don't have information from the other parent.

And the third question was whether the order is based on a prorated amount. And that is true in Arkansas and Tennessee if they have income available from the other party. And it's also true in Colorado, Iowa and Florida, but it's not a Guidelines provision. It's because of their income imputation policies that

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it lands that way.
And the next page, the page three of the memo, talks about the advantages and disadvantages of the approach. The obvious advantage of the Arkansas and Tennessee, which is a mixed approach, that they will use the other parent's income if it's available is -it's the best income information available, so it's the most appropriate.

The obvious advantage of the Minnesota, Colorado, Iowa and Florida approach is that it is more consistent. It's not going to vary depending on whether income information is available from the other parent.

And then obviously Colorado, Iowa and Florida's approach which allowed for income imputation to the other party are support orders that are more reasonable and affordable.

And then so, that pretty much answers the question. The one thing that
we did include in here that wasn't asked for is that there is a recent federal letter on IV-E Foster Care referrals to IV-D Child Support that has been receiving a lot of attention. I was at a conference last week for child support in Washington, DC, and there was a whole session on this.

It is both the National IV-E Agency and the National IV-D Child Support Agency that are encouraging limiting the referrals of IV-E Foster Care. And I realize that non-parent caretaker cases might not always be IV-E Foster Care.

But they had a memo that they issued in July last year that they recognize that for cases where the goal is family reunification and the child has been removed out of the home because of economic issues, which is the majority of the reasons that they are removed from the home. It might be that the parent or
parents can't afford to pay rent or there is some other issues with them.

But they are encouraging States to not pursue child support in those situations, particularly at the goal of family reunification.

And so, I just checked the Alabama statute -- and I am an economist, not a lawyer, so feel free anybody to correct me or add. And it looks like -It looks like Alabama's position where you could limit your referrals and you don't have to set child support in every single IV-E case. So, I think that you're good as far as situated where you can engage in the practice encouraged by the -- at the federal level in this July 2022 memo. But certainly somebody could correct me if I got that wrong.

And then the last paragraph is just some of the research on why they suggest that you shouldn't pursue child support or some statistics pursuing child

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support in federal foster care cases. That there is a Wisconsin study that found that for every $\$ 100$ more in child support ordered against the mother lengthened the child's time in foster care and delayed family reunification by 6.6 months. So, that just underscores that policy.

And then I thought this statistic was interesting that they found that most cases where there was a third-party care, that child support had already been ordered and new orders were established for 38\% of non-resident fathers and new orders were established for $22 \%$ of resident mothers when the child was removed from the home.

And again, this is IV-E Foster Care. So, it's a smaller subset of those situations where child support would be ordered in a non-parent caretaker case. I mean, there is also other situations, as you all know.

So, I am going to stop there and open it up for -- or return it to Chair Penny and see what discussion we can have.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. There is a lot of meat there, and I appreciate your going above and beyond. I thought the Wisconsin study was particularly significant.

Let's turn it over to the discussion from the Committee. First, do you have any questions?

MR. MADDOX: First of all, I wanted to point out I handed out, Jane, a -- as part of our dependency statute, 12-15-314, Subsection (e), which seems to be contrary to this policy that has just been issued. It basically requires juvenile courts to order child support in dependency cases from the parent, or it could be a legal guardian or a legal custodian. That doesn't matter if they have been placed in foster care or not.

So, that's interesting that it seems to be contrary to our State law currently. And I have handed that out for everybody to see. So, that --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Did everybody get a copy? Did members of the public get a copy? Would y'all like a copy?

MS. WILSON: We ran out.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Oh, you need some more?

MR. MADDOX: Okay. Anyway, I just wanted to point that out.

DR. VENOHR: Thank you, Bob, for doing follow-up on that. That's very good information.

MR. MADDOX: And there have been a couple of Alabama Court of Civil Appeals cases on the statute that track the language that it's mandatory that a court order support.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right. Which, again, is part of what this Committee will do is to consider changes to the -- We will
consider changes to the Rules and make recommendations to the Supreme Court. And of course one of the things we try to do is be in compliance with the federal laws.

And so, the information about the recent letter from the feds is of interest, and that we will need to keep -- the Committee will need to keep that in mind. And, of course, as I mentioned, Jennifer is not here to represent DHR, but we have a lot of good representatives from -- that are well-versed in the federal law.

So, again, we will open up this area for comments from the Committee and members. Anything else, Bob?

MR. MADDOX: Real quick, for clarification, this is just a letter, not federal law, correct, Lathesia?

MS. MCCLENNEY: That's correct.
The State received this information from the Federal Office of Child Support, as well as the Federal IV-E Agency as Dr.

Venohr has mentioned.
So, Department heads that are managing the IV-D agencies throughout varying States across the country, those decisions will have to be addressed and made between IV-E and IV-D and, of course, the preferred practices according to, you know, the Department heads.

So, our Commissioner, Nancy Buckner, is aware of this information. And our Deputy Commissioners of both the Family and Children's Services Department Division and Family Resources, which is where our IV-E Agency, falls under with DHR, we are all aware of this emphasis from the federal offices. And we are, you know, in discussion about how that practice could be incorporated or how our current practices could possibly be enhanced by what the federal offices are suggesting for States.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: And in some instances, these sort of informational
letters become informative as to what might occur in changes in federal law.

So, it's helpful for our Committee to stay on top of that so we can kind of begin to think about if there are changes, what directions will we need to go.

So, it's very helpful to me. Other comments or thoughts?

MS. MILLS: I guess -- I handle DHR child support, so I deal with this issue quite often. And, generally, I would say our local office tries to set the cases on the same docket if there is a mother and a father and DHR is pursuing both of them. And if they happen to be able to get served and be there on the same date, we use both incomes to calculate support.

And what I do on the form is I -- instead of plaintiff and defendant, I mark it out and I write "mom" on one column and "dad" on the other column and we run the numbers.

Generally, if one parent is not there but we do know that there is another parent, somebody has been adjudicated to be the father, our court will impute minimum wage to the parent that was not there because of the view, as she mentioned, in having one parent pay 100\% does not seem reasonable when you have another available parent. There are cases where there is not an available parent or that parent is deceased, then at times the court will require that parent to pay 100\%.

I have had situations where I had mother and father both present and still together. And so, you know, just a minimum wage child support paying \$500 a month, and the court felt that that would be cost-prohibitive for a reunification plan. And so, the court has deviated from the Guidelines maybe on one parent. They ordered one parent to pay, and they deviated due to a financial hardship and

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chose not to make that second parent pay or pay a reduced amount.

So, I've kind of had all of the situations at one time or another. But this is a regular issue that we deal with every week.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yes. This was, again, brought to our attention, the issues, from the judges and some of the practitioners that deal with that. So, we try to address those.

In the past, there was sort of a long-standing thought process in the Committee which was approved by -- over the years by the Supreme Court. And, again, the Court changes as does the Committee that there was a benefit from at least having a minimum $\$ 50$-- and we, again, recommended and the Supreme Court accepted this last go round the minimum \$50 order.

Now, there has been some federal laws where you get to keep a
certain amount as the -- that sometimes that minimum order doesn't come into play in a few instances.

But there is some positive
benefits behind -- the Committee has
discussed before behind a parent paying and a child knowing that their parents are contributing to their support. So, that is a policy issue that we have dealt with before.

But, again, it's interesting
when you place that against this
Wisconsin study that says that even $\$ 100$ or more order against the custodial parent in this case resulted in the child being in foster care for a period of time. And that is, again, another public policy that has to be considered.

MS. STEINWINDER: Penny, I've got
-- Katie Steinwinder.
Emily, you said that y'all
often put your juvenile and your juvenile child-support cases on the same docket?

MS. MILLS: Yeah. Our juvenile cases are separate. Our DHR cases all go through our CS court. We have private attorneys. Our child support does not go through the District Attorney's Office.

Our juvenile cases -- our
District Attorney's Office at one time -I did prosecute through a contract child support through the DA's office too. And when I did that, the DA prosecution, which was basically a nonsupport, they did not do contempts, civil contempts, modifications, establishments. But our District Attorney prosecutes criminal contempts, and those go through the juvenile court.

All of our cases go through the CS court.

MS. STEINWINDER: Well, in Montgomery County what I have seen is that you can have a juvenile parent, a parent in juvenile court who has a child whose, you know, custody is taken by the Department.

So, you have the juvenile dependency issues rocking on, and you are having adjudicatory hearings and all of these things are going on. Meanwhile, in CS court in Montgomery County, a different part of town, completely different court, a child-support case has been filed by the Department. And I am saying that loosely. I don't know who is filing on behalf of the Department, the DA's office.

You have got parents out at JU who show up and the attorneys say, you're not paying child support. And they are like, I don't know what you're talking about. I've not been served. They don't even know there is a child-support case pending across town against them. It's totally separate courts. Maybe they've -- maybe they're homeless, and they've never been served. So, you've got parents who don't even know they have an obligation. It continues to tick up, and
then in a dependency hearing, it's held against them because they weren't supporting their child.

MS. MILLS: So, we -- At times
there has been child support established in the juvenile case through some issues within our -- I don't want to say issues but maybe efficiency. I think it was encouraged that most everything goes through child-support court. So, I mean, I -- you know, they have to be served and have the opportunity to appear before they get an order -- a child-support order in our SC case.

So, our judges would not establish an order without them being served. Now, they may be served and not show up and not be aware by default that there is an order there. That can happen. But our CS court would not enter an order without separate service. I mean, there may be a service in the JU case, but it also would have to be served
in the CS case.
MS. WILSON: This is Rhonda Wilson.

I agree with Emily. Our process is the same way. I'm in Bessemer, and we do the process the same way. They are separate cases. We don't do orders without separate service. And the way that she was talking about imputing wages, $I$ do it the exact same way. So...

MS. KING: I know -- this is
Rachel King.
And I know former Judge Kramer, now Judge Bell, in JU cases if there wasn't service on a parent. He would still list them as a parent, you know, in the preamble of the order, but he would specifically state that the order did not apply to that parent because he or she had not been served and, therefore, there was no jurisdiction to order anything against that person.

MS. STEINWINDER: Sure. And there shouldn't be. You'll --

MS. KING: I agree.
MS. STEINWINDER: You'll end up

MS. KING: But we see it. Yeah.
MS. STEINWINDER: You will end up in a dependency trial, and you get totally

MS. KING: And it gets used against you.

MS. STEINWINDER: -- (inaudible).
MS. KING: No, I agree. Because I have seen that when it gets bifurcated when there is a married couple and there is a dependency action going on, they started a divorce, divorce court says we are going to reserve child support and visitation to juvenile court. Juvenile court may end the case without entering any of that.

So, then you have a CS court case that pops up through IV-D, and it really complicates things.

MS. BEACH: This is Shirlee
Beach.
I think that is what this provision was trying to avoid. The problem is is that there is reluctance -I think there has been at least on the part of the juvenile judges -- whether it be for time or what because there are no IV-D people or child-support people in these dependency hearings. The support is oftentimes either the order says that there is a referral to child support or this is moved to CS court or child support shall be considered by them. But there is not necessarily a dollar order in those juvenile cases which is what I think this (e) is trying to make happen. I'm not sure that it's happening a lot. MS. BALDWIN: This is Melody Baldwin.

The experience that I have had
with some of these, we don't get -- we probably should get more of the foster
care cases than we do. We don't get a lot of referrals for them. And when we do, when we finally get to the point where we are about to order support, we do get requests from the reporting agency, because they're -- if they are trying to reunify to hold off or not do it to dismiss it to make findings of paternity if they haven't. And they should have already done that in the dependency, but, you know, we might be there on a paternity, as well.

And there is apparently more budget money for child support to pay through the State for paternity tests than there is for the IV-E. I think I am consistent --

MS. MILLS: That is a --
MS. WILSON: Yes.
MS. MILLS: I don't know if that is a new issue, but that was an issue that developed in our county where it was more cost effective. Maybe the county had to
pay for the paternity tests through juvenile court. I'm not sure that that is accurate. But if it went through CS court, then the State paid for it.

MS. BALDWIN: Right. And so, for y'all, that is what is happening probably. MS. KING: Yeah.

MS. BALDWIN: Okay. There are more resources to take care of that in CS court with paternity tests. And so, that's why we get some of those.

MS. BEACH: This is Shirlee Beach.

That is something to consider with what we are looking at too because, you know, if we establish paternity, we have to establish support.

So, if we are looking at a
potential of not having these cases referred because of the child-support issue, understand that if it gets referred at least, you know, the IV-E stuff, we don't have an option. We will
have to do support, as well.
MS. BALDWIN: Sometimes, though, our judges just will do a finding of paternity and just either reserve support for a later date or zero --

MS. BEACH: That's an option.
MS. BALDWIN: It's in there.
MS. BEACH: Uh-huh (positive response) .

MS. BALDWIN: It's in the order, but it's not something they have to pay.

MS. BEACH: Correct.
MS. MILLS: And I have seen where -- and like I said, I don't handle protective services for DHR, but I have seen where I have had parents come in, and they feel really strongly about showing that they can provide support. So, they want to show that they are making their payments in order as a -- and I don't know if that is a measurement that Protective Services uses -- but to show that they can actually provide financial support for
their child.
So, I do have parents who are really strongly working for reunification as that is a marker for them to show that they -- and then I have some that come in where, hey, if they are going to be reunified in 90 days and the judge may continue it and let's see if they actually do get reunified in 90 days, if they don't, we are going to set support then. And if they do, then, you know, there is no support order. It's just retro support entered. I have had that happen, too.

HON. COOK: So, this is Greg Cook. So, I have some dumb questions.

So, every time someone is put into foster care, there is support ordered; is that right? Because it says "shall."

> MS. FANN: Shall request.

MS. KING: Yeah, it's --
MS. WILSON: No.

HON. COOK: So, that's not true? It's not true that every time someone is put in foster care that the parents are ordered to pay support?

MS. WILSON: No.
HON. COOK: Okay. So, how often does that happen? Is that most of the time? Half of the time? Part of the time?

MS. WILSON: This is Rhonda Wilson.

In Bessemer, it's done -- The child-support unit gets a referral from the -- the referrals are driven by the child welfare caseworkers. So, if they don't provide referrals, then we don't file a case.

HON. COOK: So, if they get sent to foster care, they do get ordered or they don't get ordered?

MS. WILSON: It depends. It is driven by the -- the foster care worker must send a petition or a request --

HON. COOK: For support.

MS. WILSON: -- for the support, and then from there, we take it and work it all the way up to the point of filing a petition and getting support done.

HON. COOK: So, as we sit here today, we don't even know if this happens in most of the cases or not in most of the cases?

MS. WILSON: I will just say antidotal without any, like, hard numbers, more often than not, not.

MS. BEACH: This is Shirlee Beach.

I think you would have to look at what county.

MS. WILSON: Right.
MS. BEACH: Because our county is extremely good about doing referrals. Our county director has done a really good job of getting the two units to communicate. But that's part of the problem is the communication between the two --

MS. WILSON: Programs.

MS. BEACH: -- and the
understanding I think sometimes of the court about how things work in the two different units. Most outside people see DHR as one entity. And so, they assume that we all know what the other is doing. That is not necessarily true.

Our policies in the child-support units are often very different than what they are on the IV-E side. We have to have a client --

HON. COOK: I'm sorry. IV-E side?

MS. BEACH: That's the foster care.

HON. COOK: Foster care.
MS. BEACH: IV-E, that is foster care. We have to have a client in order to open a case. And our client in those situations is the foster care worker who is sending us a case for these two individuals, mom and dad assuming, that owe the support.

When they do that -- and there is an electronic process for that in our county that works really good. But then they also have to provide the juvenile order and a couple of other things to us so that we will have what we need to proceed.

So, that has to all happen in our county in order for it to go forward. And I guess in all counties, it would have to happen that way.

MS. MILLS: And just so you know, Justice Cook -- and DHR workers, if I misstate it, please say so.

If somebody receives assistance, like TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the State requires them to open a child-support case. So, not only if you are in foster care and you are getting services, if we are providing you financial assistance, we require that parent or that grandparent to open a child-support case
with the idea -- this is how I was always taught, so if it's not correct, please correct me -- with the idea we are going to provide you assistance but hopefully we are going to be able to make the parent start supporting the child. And once that parent starts supporting the child, the support you receive from the State will either be reduced or stopped altogether.

MS. BEACH: This is Shirlee Beach.

I want to differentiate here.
MS. MILLS: Okay.
MS. BEACH: Foster children -the custodians of foster children do not receive necessarily anything -- any assistance.

MS. MILLS: That's right. It's two separate issues.

MS. BEACH: Yes. Yes.
MS. MILLS: We do it for children
in foster care, and then we also do it for
children who are with their parents who may receive TANF. Because, you know, a lot of times we have people in there who would never be in the child-support system because, you know, but they receive assistance and we require them to move forward.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Before the child is in the third-party home, like a grandparent's home.

MS. BEACH: Uh-huh (positive response) .

MS. KING: I have a question. This is Rachel King.

I guess it is directed towards you, Rhonda, since you kind of commented on, you know, what Bessemer is likely to do.

In order to sort of meet -- I think it was the Wisconsin study, do we have anything in place right now to take into consideration what other requirements are made of the parents
through like an ISP for the reunification?

So, for example, if they are having to take time off work constantly to go to parenting classes or drug tests or -- you know, so their income is greatly affected because they are usually hourly wage workers, do we look at -- are we required or do we look at how much is being asked of them already before we then refer them for an obligation of child support?

MS. WILSON: I would say, no, basically because it goes back to what Shirlee was saying. The two departments work independently. I wouldn't have no idea -- I don't get access to any ISPs, any court orders. I don't know what -- I mean, that's not even part of my wheelhouse as the child-support attorney.

So, I'm not sure what they are required and what their expenditures might be or what their time constraints
are. However, our referee is pretty good about it, and he will pull their case. Now, I'm not saying in every case, but, you know, especially ones that he is more familiar with. He will pull it and see what they're doing and see -- a lot of times he determines if we are going to do a support order right away, wait or whatever. He will pull and see if they are on unsupervised visitation, supervised visitation, and makes kind of a judgment based on that. Because if it's like -- if you are on supervised visitation, you are a good ways away probably from reunification. So, he is more likely to order support versus somebody who has been unsupervised visitation with overnights. You are getting close -- when you are getting unsupervised visit -- When your child is in foster care and you are in overnight unsupervised visitation, you are getting close to reunification. So,
he thinks a little bit more about ordering you support. So...

MS. KING: I just think in light of we now have this information from Wisconsin. I think I can see -- if we don't take those into consideration, I think there is a really strong argument from the parents of being set up to fail, to not ever be able to be reunified. And I don't know about you guys, but I've seen a lot lately on CBS Sunday morning and on the news on that issue specifically, that we set up so many barriers that prevent that reunification because they are not able to afford to keep working and do it all.

So, in other words, they are just left to sort of go, well, I guess I won't get my kids back.

MS. BEACH: This is Shirlee
Beach.
I want to speak to that. I do not disagree with you at all; however, we deal with Guidelines.

MS. KING: Yeah. Oh, yeah.
MS. BEACH: And so, all of that is at the discretion of the court.

MS. WILSON: Right.
MS. BEACH: And to bring the other end to it and make it their responsibility, it adds a whole new layer of stuff.

I think we depend on the foster care workers themselves, granted they are required to request it, I think that their policy requires that they refer it. However, I know that there are counties that use discretion in referring those cases. The child-support unit is not going to take action on a foster care case unless we have that referral.

So, what we are thinking and hoping is that if we get it, then they want us to move forward with Rule 32. That's kind of how we look at it.

MS. WILSON: All right. We don't go behind the scenes and ask questions.

MS. BEACH: Right.
MS. WILSON: It's just like, if they referred it, then we are assuming that they have met all of the requirements necessary, and they make the determination about whether it should be referred or not.

MS. BEACH: Yes.
MS. WILSON: It doesn't fall back on, like, the child-support unit.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: So, the discretion to go forward is left with the social worker who -- or foster care worker who is more knowledgeable about the family dynamics and the situation.

MS. WILSON: That's correct. And then I would say an additional layer of discretion would be with the judges and how familiar they might be with that family or how much initiative they take to see what is going on in the $J U$ case.

But as far as like the child-support unit, that will be outside of our purview or, like I said, I say
wheelhouse.
MS. KING: Penny, wouldn't you think it would be advantageous then to have that transparency somewhere so that these parents recognize that it is actually being considered? You know, all of their other obligations that -- you know, because I don't think many of these parents in that system are aware of what is being considered and not being considered. They see it as I'm just being required, not through a court order, but an ISP to do all of these things. How could I possibly have time to work and make money and pay this and also meet all of my obligations to be reunified with my children.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Well, of course, there are a lot of family law issues that are brought to this Committee, some of which really lie outside the purview. And the last meeting or so we had someone that spoke to our Committee and had compelling issues that were unfortunately
not something that we could deal with. But I think it's informative, and I think this one does have a nexus with the child-support issue.

So, I think it's important information for us to have. And hopefully even just this discussion is beneficial as y'all go back with -amongst the DHR and foster care to talk about this.

And, again, as I said, when we see letters like this, we can see a horizon where we may be faced with, do we need to build in some other reasons for deviating from Child-Support Guidelines that we can see perhaps in the future coming? Because I can see it playing in to our Committee in that regard.

MS. KING: Well, I was thinking in terms of like what we did with the self-support reserve, just having that transparency within the IV-D to itself so that these parents were aware that this is
being considered for your benefit.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right. And it
may --
MS. MCCLENNEY: May I add?
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.
MS. MCCLENNEY: Lathesia

McClenney.
And I just want to add this, you know, throughout this rich discussion, the information that has been provided to States from federal offices, one word that just stands out and that's, you know, in the information provided by Dr. Venohr, is that it encourages States with their IV-E agencies to only refer those cases that are appropriate. Okay. Who defines "appropriate"?

MS. WILSON: Yeah, that's why I underlined that word. Who defines
"appropriate"?
MS. MATTHEWS: So, that within itself is --

MS. KING: Problematic.

MS. MCCLENNEY: -- just a very extensive timeline of discussions and roundtable thoughts --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right.
MS. MCCLENNEY: -- about the definition of what is appropriate and who determines what is appropriate.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: And it seems from the discussion with who determines what is appropriate, that that ball falls in the court of the foster care worker in terms of --

MS. MCCLENNEY: The IV-E Agency.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Uh-huh
(positive response). Yes, in those circumstances. But certainly it is a policy concern that we need to deal with.

Time is, of course, passing us by. It has been an excellent discussion. Some of the underlying questions that we had again was from the perspective of the courts and what the courts order regarding child support as relating to
whether both parents' income should be considered or the custodial parents' income that is to be considered. And Dr. Venohr provided us with information about that.

So, at this juncture, I know that Jennifer is not here, but anyone that has any suggestions for how this Committee should move forward, then I would suggest that we think about maybe putting those in writing, and we can certainly have a Subcommittee that kind of goes forward. And following the sort of Baptist approach that we have, if you are not in church, you are liable to be appointed as Chairman of a Committee.

And so, Jennifer is not here, through no fault of her own, but I would suggest that if anybody has any suggestions, if you would send it in writing to us and also we will send it to Jennifer. And then if we do get those suggestions, then we will do a

Subcommittee that can look further on this.

But, Dr. Venohr, your memorandum here has been very helpful in helping us to identify some of the issues that we do need to deal with.

The other issue that is kind of left was the daycare rates, and Jennifer could not come but she did provide me with a paragraph that I will read. And then because we have limited time, we will not discuss it other than any comments that the Committee wants to make very quickly, and then we will leave on the table anything else.

Her comment, she said, regarding the DHR childcare Program says (as read) "DHR's childcare Service Division provides a childcare subsidy to certain individuals. DHR Childcare Program is not mandated or intended to pay the full cost of childcare. Its purpose is to supplement the cost for
low-income participants. Participants contribute and pay any cost not covered by the DHR subsidy. To determine the amount of the subsidy, every two years DHR must conduct a Child Care Market Rate Study to determine the rate charged per child. In 2021, Alabama State University developed and conducted a market survey for DHR which could be found at" -- and she's included the site which we will put this on the record, this document. And that will be included for the public. I won't read out the link here.

So, before Dr. Venohr has to leave us, does anybody have any questions related to her memorandum that you would like to direct to Dr. Venohr? Any Committee members? (No response).

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. Thank you, Jane. We always appreciate the good work that you do for the State of Alabama and the children there.

MR. MADDOX: Thank you.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Thanks so much.

Okay. Before we start with opening comments from the public, we will go back and see if y'all have changed your mind. But let me ask the new Committee members -- we will start with Emily and go around. And I am asking this question cold. And so, don't feel obligated to speak or don't feel like you are precluded from speaking later. But I wanted to ask you if there is any particular topics relating to the Child-Support Guidelines Committee's charge that you would like for us to consider for the future Committee work.

So, Emily, I am putting you on the spot first. You are being called on by me again.

MS. MILLS: I do like the idea of whether we impute minimum wage when it's a foster care case or one parent is only available. I think that's a very important
topic in all fairness.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: I think so too. Okay. Justice Cook?

HON. COOK: So, I will turn it on you. I don't have a question, but I have a question for you --

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yes, sir.
HON. COOK: -- which is y'all
have proposed a new -- you voted last time for a new Rule. I have read the 50/50 Rule. If anybody wanted to give me a description of why we are doing this and particularly why we used the 150\% Rule, that might be helpful.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yeah. And I probably should have kept Dr. Venohr for this part. But the answer to the first part of the question, which is why we felt compelled to do this, we have actually sent that to the Court before --

HON. COOK: Okay.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: -- and it was sent back to us.

HON. COOK: Did we tell you why we sent it back?

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yes. Actually I was not the Chair of the Committee, but I was asked by the Court to speak. And by the time I had got there, we had done some more work on it, and we felt like it was not as good of a job as we could do. And so, I actually asked the Court not to proceed with it. And so, they graciously agreed to turn us down. And so, we did more work on it.

MR. MADDOX: This was several years ago.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yes.
MR. MADDOX: Several, like, seven, eight years ago.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yeah, a long time ago. Time flies.

But the reason we initially started is there are more and more cases in which joint custody is ordered or some version of a 50/50 shared arrangement.

And we had been asked by members of the trial courts as well as the lawyers and the -- and even some of the public said, you know, they wanted some degree of knowing what to do. And we did some research way back when. And across the State, different judges were handling it in different ways. They had set up their own formula for figuring out how to come up with that. And one of the charges of -- overall charges of the -- from the feds to us and the Guidelines is uniformity throughout the State.

So, we thought it would be helpful to give the trial judges and the lawyers that are trying to present the trial judges a formula that made sense.

Where the 150\% came from -- and the reason I wish Dr. Venohr was still here is they do a lot --

MR. MADDOX: She may be. She's logged on.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Are you still
there, Dr. Venohr?
DR. VENOHR: Yeah.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Good. Can we call you back and you tell briefly -- This is Justice Cook. He is a new Justice on our Court. And so, they are now considering the recommendation that we made before.

And so, his question that you may not have heard was: Where did we arrive at the 150\% figure? So, if you would address that to Justice Cook. He's on that side.

DR. VENOHR: I can't see him on the camera.

So, the $150 \%$ is to address that it costs more to raise a child in two households than one household. And historically it's been estimated to cost 150\% more and that's what most States that use this type of formula, which is essentially calculating a theoretical order for each parent weighing it by the
amount of time that that child is with the other parent and then offsetting them, and the parent owing the higher amount pays the difference.

So, we start off with 150\% because that's what it costs to raise a kid in two households.

We do have some economic evidence that that amount should actually be a little bit more than 150\%. And some of the duplicated expenses are housing, which counts for about $30 \%$ to $40 \%$ depending on how you slice and dice it, you know, because there's household expenses in that including, you know, cleaning products or furniture.

And then the other major duplicated expense is some transportation. And combining those two expenses are a little over 60\%.

So, I am going to pause there and see if there is any follow-up questions.

HON. COOK: No. That pretty well covers it, especially the other statutes at $150 \%$. It just seemed a little bit of an arbitrary number, but I appreciate it. If there's studies behind it and that's what other States do, I understand. Thank you.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Yeah. I think there was one -- Was there one State that was considering using 160\%?

DR. VENOHR: Yes, Chair Davis. You remember well. West Virginia has a proposal to go to 160\%. All the States -there are about 23 States that use this and 21 of them I think use 150\%. Virginia uses 140\%. I don't know why. And then Oklahoma has a sliding scale that starts at I think it's 165\% and then it goes down to $150 \%$.

So, there's two or three States that do something different.

HON. COOK: Got it.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Any other questions that relate?

MR. MADDOX: Good job, Jane.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: That's right. Thank you for hanging on.

So, that is kind of the answer to two -- Any other questions relating to that proposal?

HON. COOK: No. No. If there had been an objection by the Court historically, I would like to know that. Otherwise, that's all I've got.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: No. It was relating to the calculations that we sent before were not really as good, and we did spend -- even before Dr. Venohr was on, we did some extensive study. And then we paused our study for our obligation to every four years do the scheduling.

And then after we did our Rule -- our Rule 42 -- I mean, Schedule requirements, met our federal requirements, then we jumped back on this. So, it's been a fairly lengthy review process.

Any other Committee members who
were present then want to add anything? (No response).

PROFESSOR DAVIS: And we are very fortunate to have Brian Gray. He is our statistician from the University of Alabama. So, the Court included him several years ago, and he has been our -if you have a life saver, the guy that is standing over there throwing you the little ring, he is our ring -- he throws and catches the rings and brings them back in and keeps us straight. So, he is an excellent resource, and we appreciate y'all including him.

Any other questions or comments relating to that?
(No response).
PROFESSOR DAVIS: All right. Well, at this point, we do have -- if I can find my letter from the public. Thank you. MR. MADDOX: You're welcome. PROFESSOR DAVIS: The letter from the individual said (as read) "As it
relates to the true shared (50/50) custody, since health insurance is required for children, are there any plans to include language for state mandated auto insurance for children of driving age with a permit/driver's license?"

And so, I had -- We got that fairly recently and I had asked Dr. Venohr to do some research for us to see how other States deal with that. We always try to respond to questions, particularly if we get them from the public. When we get letters from them, I can't always direct -- we don't necessarily know who they are, so we can't respond as we can if they address the group. And they will also ask when the transcripts for the meeting will be released, which is good to know that they are reading the transcripts and interested in coming. It shows how important Wendy and her colleagues are to us.

So, let me ask our two present public members, do y'all -- Have you changed your mind about wanting to speak?

MS. CLARK: No, ma'am.
MS. HOWELL: No, ma'am.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

Well, since we have a couple more minutes, let me ask: Does anyone have any thoughts about this issue as it relates to auto insurance? Does anybody have any, whether in private cases or otherwise --

MS. KING: Well, I think we do -or I mean, the courts still have the discretion within that material change of circumstances that, you know, if you show that the child's needs have increased, the judge has the discretion to increase and include things such as the expense of a car, insurance, you know, whatever it may be.

MS. FANN: To deviate --

MS. KING: I feel like it already contemplates this.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Is there anybody yet who has done a private divorce, do you ever draft in there --

MS. KING: Yes.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: -- who pays for the child's auto insurance? Because it's a fairly substantial --

MS. FANN: Repair, maintenance --
MS. KING: Gas.
MS. FANN: -- insurance, fuel.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right.
MS. FANN: Yeah, all of that.
MS. MILLS: I haven't made it a part -- y'all may have part of the Guidelines, per sé. We have had the judge's inequity or outside order the parents to split car insurance cost or maintenance costs. I have had judges say that they do not want to do that because they don't want to mandate that a child has to have a car. I have had it go both ways.

But I've never actually had it calculated as part of the Child-Support Guidelines itself.

I don't know that the courts would be amenable to including that as a mandate per sé to be included because then you would be requiring that parent to provide a car -- or if one parent chose to provide a car, then you would be mandating that that other parent has to agree to provide the car.

MS. KING: It's like college education.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right. So, the situation you are talking about is when both parents are in agreement --

MS. KING: Yes.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: -- not the court ordering it?

MS. KING: Well, no, not
necessarily because, you have -- you know,
I have tried cases where they -- a party wants additional child support, an upper
deviation for private school tuition or -you know, so, they don't necessarily want the court to order the noncustodial parent to pay the private school tuition, they just want an upper deviation of the child support taking in the increased needs of those children, likewise with the insurance and the vehicle itself.

MR. MADDOX: To me, that would be a way for deviation.

MS. FANN: A deviation.
MS. KING: Yeah. But I think to mandate it would be along the same lines of then you're allowing for divorced parents to have to be obligated to pay for college but not married parents. And so, it's the same argument.

MS. FANN: The same thing.
MS. BEACH: The other thing is that they are comparing it to the day care or the health insurance expenses. And, you know, I don't know if that is going to be -- I mean, it -- to me it's apples and
oranges.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right. Well, I think they -- again, I'm assuming this person is probably not a lawyer. But coming from the perspective of health insurance is mandated. You have to have it for your children. And they have in parenthesis -- and I didn't read it that way -- State mandated auto insurance.

So, from their perspective --
HON. COOK: If you have a car.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: -- the State is mandating insurance.

MS. BEACH: Okay.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: And so, I think their perspective is that both are mandated by government entities. And I understand that is their perspective.

MS. MILLS: And I think that is a reasonable request. It is actually
illogical, but I think it goes back to if the State mandates us to provide our children a car, then they would have to
provide that.
MS. STEINWINDER: Katie
Steinwinder.
Just really quick. Is it Ex parte Christopher that might --

MS. FANN: Yes.
MS. STEINWINDER: -- be instructive for the individual to know that there is a case -- an Ex parte Christopher that is an analogy maybe to that issue.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Right. Right.
MS. FANN: Yeah. People privately negotiate payment for weddings and vehicles and all manner of things. But I think deviations are as widely available for all -- well, not for college, but you know what I'm saying, for minor children.

I have got a case where I had somebody who was incarcerated for a long time, and I am asking for an upper deviation because my client had to pay the support on her own for all that time.

So, you know, I think there is
lots of -- there is a whole world of ways and reasons that you can ask for a deviation, and that is one of them.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Well, we just dealt with a prison issue. So, that may alter how you go forward in the future with that.

But I do think that these types of discussions are helpful. We know that this person reads our transcript. So, any suggestions that you have, then he or she can read this and benefit from the suggestion.

So, any other comments relating to this?

MS. WILSON: I guess -- this is Rhonda Wilson.

I guess the only thing I was thinking of -- and I think other people kind of touched on it too -- is the only difference between the State mandated is that you are not forced to drive. Driving is a privilege, especially for a
minor child. I mean, I think I would view it totally different if minor children were mandated to have cars, then, of course, you would be mandated for auto insurance. But since that's not -- I mean, I just think it falls within a deviation just like Rachel and Heather said. It's something you could argue in a deviation, but I wouldn't be in favor --

MS. FANN: And let me say this, if you don't mind. This is Heather again. It's probably most similar to extra-curriculars --

MS. WILSON: Yeah.
MS. FANN: -- because that's during the minority of the child and it, you know, can vary wildly from different sort of family culture --

MS. KING: Travel ball.
MS. FANN: -- of how much you are spending on that kind of thing. Gymnastics.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: In the interest of time, let's go ahead and go around to all the new Committee members, in particularly, and see if anybody has any thoughts of what else we want to think about going forward.

So, anything else, Emily?
MS. MILLS: No, ma'am.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. Anybody
on the other Committee -- the long-term members can also have opinions too. Anybody else?

MS. FANN: I almost always find a soap box, but I don't have one today.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: You are reserving your soap box --

MS. FANN: For a later day.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Rhonda, have you got a question?

MS. WILSON: I do. I have always been -- and this is always a thing that is kind of tricky. I would just like more clarification sometimes about how to give
credit to a noncustodial party when they have prior kids and support obligations, but it's not pursuant to an order. It's a provision, I think, to give credit, but it's always but, like, how do you do that?

MS. KING: To consider, yeah. The Rule says to consider it.

MS. WILSON: The Rule says you can consider it, but like how does it play out in reality?

MS. KING: It doesn't.
MS. WILSON: And most of the time we just don't deal with it because how do you do it?

MS. KING: I've had clients argue that to me, and I tell them all the time, good luck. This judge is not going to hear it.

MS. WILSON: Right.
MS. BALDWIN: This is Melody
Baldwin.
I always just argue it's a
"may," not a "shall." You will have to
ask the Court, and it will be up to the Court. And the Court usually starts saying, okay, how old is that child, how old is this child. And, you know, a lot of them see it as a first in time, first in light, kind of thing, even though that is not technically correct I don't think.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: It's first who went to court.

MS. KING: First order.
MS. FANN: Right.
MS. BALDWIN: Mostly, yeah. So
-- but, yeah.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: And I will say that in response to Rhonda's question, that determination that you would take the first in, first out, the FIFA approach of counting for children is -- the determination was made even before I was on the Committee and I have been on the Committee for a long time. So, I guess that could be a consideration that the Committee looks at and takes back to the

Court is: Do we want to be based on whether that person went to court and had an order, or is it birth order, or is there something else?

So, that is something that if you have some thoughts and want to present some alternatives to the Committee, we would certainly welcome that. Or if you have other people that you want to talk to about that and get their feelings, then we would love to address that.

MS. FANN: And, Rhonda, while you are at that, I will give you another wrinkle for you. I had a case where I'm having a divorce. I've got a child that has been around awhile. The mistress goes to Family Court while the divorce is pending and gets her child's obligation out before this child --

MS. WILSON: That's pre-existing.
MS. FANN: You know, there is
some sticky sort of policy considerations
with that first in and first out and situations like that too.

MS. WILSON: Yeah.
MS. FANN: Deviation.
PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. All
right. We are about right on time. Is there anything else that any of the Committee members would like to bring up before the Committee? When is our -- Do we have another meeting?

MR. MADDOX: Yes. The next meeting is Friday, March 24th, same place except hopefully we will be in the Mezzanine room upstairs, 10 o'clock.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Any of these new ideas that you have, we will add to the agenda or anything else that needs to go forward? We will have presumably a Subcommittee report maybe. We have a lot of issues that they will present at that time. If we have any other issues relating to -- or suggestions related to these two topics, we will bring those up. And then
if anyone presents us with something in writing about the issues that y'all have presented today, then we will go forward with those also.

MR. MADDOX: Did everyone have an opportunity to check the contact roster to see if your information is still correct? If not, I can get it to you. Everybody checked it? Thank you.

PROFESSOR DAVIS: Okay. And we certainly thank Justice Cook for joining us and your excellent questions that are really helpful to the public.

So, if nothing else, we will stand adjourned.

MR. MADDOX: Thank you, Jane. PROFESSOR DAVIS: Thank you, Jane, and Wendy.
(Conclusion of the Advisory Committee on Child Support Guidelines and Enforcement meeting at 12:21 p.m.)
Pur

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
STATE OF ALABAMA
CHILTON COUNTY
I, Wendy Kendrick, Certified Court
Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Alabama at Large, do certify that I reported the proceedings in the matter of:

BEFORE THE STATE OF ALABAMA
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CHILD SUPPORT
GUIDELINES AND ENFORCEMENT

*     *         *             *                 *                     *                         *                             *                                 *                                     *                                         *                                             *                                                 *                                                     *                                                         * 

on Friday, February 10, 2023, the foregoing 160 computer-printed pages contain a true and correct transcript of the statements by the Committee members and other persons via Zoom.

I further certify that I am neither of relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the Committee members and other persons, nor am I a relative or employee of such Committee members and other persons, nor am I financially interested in the results thereof. All rates charged are usual and customary.

I further certify that I am duly licensed
by the Alabama Board of Court Reporting as a Certified Court Reporter as evidenced by the ACCR number following my name found below.

This 17th day of March, in the year of our
Lord, 2023.


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