

Deposition of:

Meeting

April 30, 2020

In the Matter of:

Advisory Committee On Child Support Guidelines & Enforcement

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1	MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2	ON CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES AND ENFORCEMENT
3	FOR THE STATE OF ALABAMA
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The following proceedings were held in the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Child Support Guidelines and Enforcement for the State of Alabama remotely on Thursday, April 30, 2020, beginning at or about 10:00 a.m. and was taken before Anne E. Miller, Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large.

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1	APPEARANCES FOR THE COMMITTEE	
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4	School of Law	
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6	THE HONORABLE JULIE A. PALMER	
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	MS. JENNIFER M. BUSH, Esquire	
12	State-level Child Support Attorney	
	Alabama Department of Human Resources	
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	THE HONORABLE WILLIAM THOMPSON	
15	Presiding Judge, Alabama Court of Civil Appeals	
	Montgomery	
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17	MS. MELODY BALDWIN, Esquire	
	Assistant District Attorney, Child Support	
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19	THE HONORABLE DON McMILLAN	
00	Circuit Judge	
20	Fourth Judicial Circuit	
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2	Alabama Court of Civil Appeals	
3	Montgomery MS. STEPHANIE BLACKBURN, Esquire	
3	Attorney, Legal Services Alabama	
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5	THE HONORABLE KAREN DUNN BURKS	
6	Circuit Clerk for the Bessemer Division	
	Jefferson County	
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8	THE HONORABLE SARAH STEWART, Associate Justice	
	Supreme Court of Alabama (Court Liaison)	
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	MS. KATIE STEINWINDER, Esquire	
11	Private Practice Attorney	
	Montgomery	
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13	MS. RACHEL KING, Esquire	
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14	Birmingham	
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16	Private Practice Attorney	
17	Birmingham	
18	MR. JIM JEFFRIES, Esquire	
10	Private Practice Attorney	
19	Mobile	
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	MS. JESSICA KIRK DRENNAN, Esquire	
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23	MR. GREG STARKEY, Esquire	
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3	MR. STEVE ARNOLD, Esquire
	Private Practice Attorney
4	Birmingham
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	THE HONORABLE MICHAEL SHERMAN
6	Circuit Judge, Domestic Relations Division
	Mobile County
7	
8	THE HONORABLE AUBREY FORD
	Retired District Judge
9	Macon County
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	MS. ANGELA CAMPBELL, Mobile County DHR Child Support
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L5	MR. BRAD MEDARIS, Esquire Central Staff Attorney, Supreme Court of Alabama
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	MR. BOB MADDOX, Esquire
21	Staff Attorney, Legal Division
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1	MS. CARY McMILLAN, Director
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PROCEEDINGS

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MS. DAVIS: Good morning. Welcome to the Child Support Guideline Rule 32 Committee. We are attempting to do our meeting in the best possible distancing. If everyone can hear me, would you raise your hand so I can see, and wave? Okay. Good to see many of you. I don't know if y'all are familiar with the way Zoom works. But if, for example, you are on a phone, then I will not obviously be able to see you, nor in many instances identify who you are.

So we have Anne Miller on as the court reporter, and so it will be very important that when you speak, you identify yourself. We may be able to see you, but Anne Miller may or may not be able to see you. And I'm probably the world's worst about remembering to identify myself, which I did not do. And my name is Penny Davis, and I'm the chair of this Committee. So welcome, everyone. If you have any problems being able to hear or reach us, if you will use the chat room, I think that's a possibility. All right.

So we are going to start by trying to

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welcome everyone and let everyone know who is online. 1 2. We will have first the Committee. If you have looked 3 at the agenda, we will have comments from the public 4 later, but we want to go through the roster. 5 purpose is this is a newly-formed committee so not 6 everyone knows everyone, but also to allow everyone, including our court reporter, to know of your presence and to establish that we have a quorum. So I am going to be going down the roster, and I think what we are 9 going to attempt to do is Cary and Michael, who are the 10 11 IT experts here, will unmute everyone so that you can 12 join and speak. Then I'm going to ask everyone to 13 individually mute yourselves after you have been 14 unmuted from the host, the co-host, which are 15 Cary and Michael, until I call your name so we won't 16 get a lot of background. So I'm going to start with 17 Drew, if you will identify yourself and let everybody 18 know. 19 MR. WHITMIRE: All right. So, Penny, do you want us to state who we are? 20 2.1 MS. DAVIS: Yes, just who you are and what you do. 22

MR. WHITMIRE: All right. My name is Drew

MS. COX: I'm Amanda Cox. I'm a staff

Division in Jefferson County.

- Brian Gray. I'm a statistics professor at the
- 2 University of Alabama.
- MS. DAVIS: Thank you. Judge Ford?
- 4 JUDGE FORD: Good morning. I'm Aubrey
- 5 Ford, Retired District Judge, Macon County, Alabama,
- 6 and an emeritus member.
- 7 MS. DAVIS: He is our senior member. He
- 8 has our history right there in that beautiful head of
- 9 his. Jessica?
- 10 MS. DRENNAN: I'm Jessica Drennan. I'm an
- 11 attorney in domestic relations in Birmingham.
- MS. DAVIS: Angela Campbell?
- 13 MS. CAMPBELL: Hi. I'm Angela Campbell.
- 14 I'm the Mobile County DHR child support program
- 15 manager.
- MS. DAVIS: Ms. McClenney?
- 17 MS. McCLENNEY: Good morning. This is
- 18 | Lathesia McClenney. I'm the Director for Child Support
- 19 | Enforcement Division with the Alabama Department of
- 20 Human Resources.
- MS. DAVIS: Okay. Ms. Bush?
- 22 MS. BUSH: This is Jennifer Bush. I'm an
- 23 attorney with the Department of Human Resources, state

- 1 | legal office.
- 2 MS. DAVIS: Justice Stewart is the court
- 3 | liaison.
- 4 JUSTICE STEWART: Do you want me to say
- 5 anything?
- 6 MS. DAVIS: Good morning.
- 7 JUSTICE STEWART: Good morning.
- MS. DAVIS: I appreciate all that you have
 done for the Court. And while you are up and on, would
 you like to mention the Court's order that you helped
- 11 obtain for us?
- 12 JUSTICE STEWART: Sure. We had a long
- discussion, Penny and I did, along with some AOC
- 14 members, Bob Maddox and some other folks, about the
- 15 history of this Committee, particularly the litigious
- 16 history of the Committee and the concerns with the
- 17 | public being able to have access, which is very
- 18 important to all of us. So we -- because the Supreme
- 19 Court is the one who promulgates how this gets done, we
- 20 asked the Court to sort of give their blessing about
- 21 doing this by Zoom today and to acknowledge and
- 22 acquiesce in the way that we were getting the public to
- 23 be able to interact and interface with our call today,

- which they did, and that order has been issued. So we are, I think, good to go procedurally here today.
- MS. DAVIS: Thank you. We appreciate you doing that for us. Brad is sick, but he may be home.

 He is the staff attorney. So, Brad, are you on phone or video?
- 7 MR. MEDARIS: Yes, ma'am. I'm here.
- 8 MS. DAVIS: I hope you are feeling better 9 than you sound.
- MR. MEDARIS: I will take that as a compliment.

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- MS. DAVIS: We appreciate your Herculean efforts, not only from home but sick from home. And I had mentioned that Cary and Michael are here on the IT, and Bob Maddox is here. And we are all social distancing. Bob has pulled out his tape measure. We are all six feet apart.
 - MR. MADDOX: Right here.
- MS. DAVIS: That's right. And we are trying to deal with the feedback. So if anyone has problems hearing, please let us know. Again, what we are going to try to do is to basically ask everyone --- if everyone will just mute themselves, then I think

that will be simpler than trying to ask the IT people to mute and unmute the whole group. The beauty of the muting is we don't hear everybody's dogs and cats and so forth in the background, although if you have a musical child, then that might be okay.

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Again, just as a reminder, as you are speaking in a few moments, when you Zoom in, if you want to speak, ideally, if you are visible, you can raise your hand, and we will try to identify you. But obviously there are people who are on the phone that cannot raise your hand. So if you will just unmute yourself and identify who you are, we will work out how to make sure everybody gets an opportunity to speak.

Let me pause for a minute and ask if we need to ask anything regarding the process? Okay. I would like to recognize Brad for a moment to talk about the quorum. I believe we have a quorum, but let's make sure we have that officially from Brad who represents the court.

MR. MEDARIS: Not only do we have a quorum, we have perfect attendance, which I have never seen before. So thank you all for joining.

MS. DAVIS: We may have stumbled upon the

most convenient way to do this for everyone. I do appreciate -- I know it's a trying time so thank you very much. Okay.

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Next I would like to call on Bob to discuss the news release. And, Bob, just a second. Bob, just a second. We are going to attempt to let Bob speak. He is six feet away but muted so that we hope not to get feedback. So Bob is going to speak loudly, and I will be quiet. And y'all let us know if you can't hear us, hear Bob.

MR. MADDOX: Good morning. Can you hear me?

MS. DAVIS: If you can hear Bob, raise your hand.

MR. MADDOX: I will try to talk loudly from over here six feet away. But regarding the news release, as we have done in past meetings, the news release was a web meeting to all media outlets state wide via email on two separate occasions. Actually Scott Hoyem, I think, is joining us all as well, but he asked me to give the update. Scott is working remotely. He is our public information officer at AOC, and he emailed all media outlets state wide on April

13th, 2020. That was the news release concerning any written comments people wanted to make that needed to be postmarked in the U. S. Mail no later than April 21st, 2020, to the Supreme Court clerk's office. And also a news release was issued on April 22nd, 2020, by email that allowed for the web meeting to be conducted. And if anybody wanted to make public comments by this method, they had to do so by informing by an email address by five o'clock p.m. Central time, on April 28, 2020. So those news releases were found, and they were also posted on our website.

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We have all the news releases, the agenda and materials for this meeting on our website, alacourt.gov, under Child Support, under a category called Child Support Guidelines Review. And all the documents for this Committee have been posted way back to 2004. So if anybody ever has free time and wants to read anything the Committee has done since 2004, it is still on our website under Child Support Guidelines Review.

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Bob. We will pause here for a minute to see if anyone has any questions regarding the news release. Okay. We have no

1 | questions. I will mention -- okay. Brad?

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MR. MEDARIS: Yes, ma'am. I just wanted to confirm that we received nothing through the mail, no comments through the mail from the public. I just wanted to put that on the record.

MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Brad. I forgot to ask that. The news release did give people the opportunity to make written comments to submit as well as to participate through our Zoom meeting, which several of the members of the public have joined us, and why don't we do -- as we are doing now, we weren't sure how many would join us because obviously there's a lot of down time at home. But we don't have hundreds or thousands, we have a few. So let me see if we can try to -- I think Michael has a list, and let's just get people to identify themselves, some of them by phone numbers. So I think it will be helpful now if we go ahead and get you to identify who you are so that our court reporter will have your name for her transcript.

Would you identify who you are, please, and where you are from and if you represent any particular group? Your audio is not working? Okay. We seem to

- 1 have some issues with your audio. Can you use the chat
- 2 | capabilities and let us know who you are? I will just
- 3 go on to the next person, which is identified as
- 4 | iPhone. If someone has an iPhone, identify yourself.
- 5 Okay. There are a few people that have just phone
- 6 | numbers. I'm going to go to those. Michael? We think
- 7 | iPhone may have attempted to identify themselves.
- 8 JUDGE McMILLAN: I'm on the iPhone, Don
- 9 McMillan, Circuit Judge. That's me.
- 10 MS. DAVIS: I should have noticed that
- 11 before. All right. The next individual is
- 12 251-XXX-XXXX, if you would identify yourself, please.
- 13 That's 251-XXX-XXXX. Who would be a number to report
- 14 this? I'm going to -- go ahead. The next number is
- 15 | 205-XXX-XXXX, KDB.
- 16 MS. DUNN BURKS: Yes, hi. This is Karen
- 17 Dunn Burks. I'm on the committee.
- MS. DAVIS: We are just trying to identify
- 19 -- we have a list, and we can't tell who is the public
- 20 | if the name doesn't show up. All right.
- 21 MS. DUNN BURKS: Right, I'm sorry.
- MS. DAVIS: No, that's good. Thank you.
- 23 We are all doing the best we can. Next number,

- 1 | 334-XXX-XXXX. Is that Jennifer? There is another
- 2 334-XXX-XXXX. We think that's Jennifer. Jennifer, is
- 3 | that your number? The last number is 334-XXX-XXXX.
- 4 MS. STEINWINDER: That's me, Katie
- 5 | Steinwinder, Committee member.
- 6 MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Katie. Okay. Well,
- 7 | thank you all. We are trying to identify. Maybe as we
- 8 get to the comments from the public section, we'll ask
- 9 you to reidentify yourself as you speak.
- MR. ECHOLS: Hello. Can y'all hear me?
- MS. DAVIS: Yes. Marcus Echols?
- 12 MR. ECHOLS: Yes, because I had an issue
- 13 with the computer. I don't know if you called me or
- 14 | not. I can't see my number up here.
- MS. DAVIS: So you are from where, Marcus?
- 16 MR. ECHOLS: I'm from Moulton, Alabama. I
- 17 | also work with -- hello?
- MS. DAVIS: I can hear you. Can you hear
- 19 me?
- 20 MR. ECHOLS: Yes. I thought you were
- 21 saying something. I'm from Moulton, Alabama. And I
- 22 spoke at the last meeting that was held in Montgomery.
- 23 I'm with the Child Support Hustle.Com.

MS. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you. Is there 1 2 anybody else on the public -- or on the Zoom meeting 3 with us? We have tried to identify if you have not 4 heard your name called. Okay. Thank you, everyone, 5 for your patience. I know this is kind of tedious, but 6 we are trying to do the best that we can. At this point, I would like to call on Jennifer Bush, who is 8 with DHR, to talk, give us a report on the federal 9 requirements -- excuse me. Bob reminded me I forgot to get approval of the transcript. That's our first order 10 11 of business. So everyone had an opportunity on the Committee to read the transcript. I think Bob found 12 13 one typo. Bob, will you tell us what you found? 14 MR. MADDOX: Yes. I just found one typo on 15 page 67, line 21. It should say mandatory. It says "mandatary." It's one letter wrong. So it should say 16 17 mandatory. MS. DAVIS: Okay. Did anybody else on the 18 19 Committee find an error that needs to be corrected in

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the transcript? Do I hear accept the transcript as

corrected? Can someone raise your hand if you would

like to make that motion? All right. Judge, if you

would unmute yourself and identify yourself for Anne

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1	Miller.
2	JUDGE THOMPSON: So moved by William
3	Thompson.
4	MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Judge. Do we have a
5	second?
6	MS. DUNN BURKS: I second the motion.
7	MS. DAVIS: Would you identify yourself for
8	Anne?
9	MS. DUNN BURKS: Yes, Karen Dunn Burks.
10	MS. DAVIS: Thank you. All in favor, let's
11	see. I guess we will try to do it by hands. If
12	everyone would raise your hand if you are in favor.
13	Okay. If you will hold them up, I will try to count.
14	Keep holding them up. All right. The people who did
15	not raise your hands, if you will unmute. Anyone in
16	favor?
17	MS. STEINWINDER: Katie Steinwinder in
18	favor.
19	JUDGE McMILLAN: Don McMillan in favor.
20	MS. DAVIS: Okay.
21	MS. DUNN BURKS: Karen Dunn Burks in favor.
22	MR. STARKEY: Greg Starkey in favor.
23	MS. DAVIS: That's 18. I think that's

enough as a quorum. So we will let it show on the record that a quorum did vote either by hand or orally in favor of adoption of the transcript as approved.

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Now I think it's time to move back to

Jennifer Bush on her report on the federal requirements

for the review of child support guidelines, which

occurs every four years. So, Jennifer, will you speak

now?

MS. BUSH: Yes, ma'am. This is Jennifer
Bush. I am calling in so I cannot see you or anybody
else. So if you need to interrupt me, you will have to
verbally do that. I can't see any of the other
participants.

So to discuss the report on the federal requirements, the Federal Regulation 45 C.F.R. 302.56 outlines the criteria the state should consider when conducting its child support guidelines for review.

The last guidelines review we conducted was December 1st, 2016. That makes our next four year review due December 1st of 2020, and that is in Subsection (e) of the Federal Regulation.

After we conducted our review in December of 2016, the Federal Regulation changed, and the change

was effective January 19, 2017. So about a month and a 1 2 half after our review, they changed some of the 3 criteria and the Federal Regulation. When they did 4 that, in Subsection (a), they did allow us an 5 additional year to implement those changes. And so 6 while we have to conduct our review by December 1st, 7 2020, we do have until December 1st of 2021 to implement the new changes in the Federal Regulations. 9 So do you have any questions?

MS. DAVIS: There is a hand raised. We will try to recognize you. Judge Palmer, I think, has a question.

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regulations, but -- at least exactly what Jennifer is talking about. But when you say December '20 or '21, we have to update them. In December of '16, we just had to review them. We didn't necessarily have to change them, change the formulas or anything like that. Is that still an option for December of 2021?

MS. BUSH: Based on the new -- the changes in the regulation, we will need to conduct an actual review of the dollar amounts, looking at that new criteria.

JUDGE PALMER: Okay. Thank you.

MS. DAVIS: I think her question was could we do what we did last time, which was to continue the same dollar amounts, if that's the will of the Committee, Jennifer.

MS. BUSH: Theoretically, yes. But we would still have to consider all of the criteria in the Federal Regulation. If the Committee reviews all of that criteria and determines that there is no need to change the numerical amount, theoretically then that could occur.

JUDGE PALMER: And, Penny, of course, you were there and Steve and several of you. But we did that. We sent out an RFP. We had somebody bring in some new numbers. We questioned those numbers. I think we had even planned on spending the night and coming back the next day if we needed to. So just for everybody's edification, in my opinion, we did all of that but then also decided just to keep the numbers where they were.

MS. DAVIS: That's correct, Judge. Anyone else?

MS. BUSH: Penny, this is Jennifer Bush

again. If there are no more questions, there are various changes as I mentioned in the regulation. The text changes that were required have already been adopted in May. So they have been adopted by the Supreme Court. They have been incorporated into Rule 32, and that's occurred. However, there are changes to the way the guidelines are calculated. And so those changes still have to be made, and I'm going to go over those with you now.

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The remaining criteria to be addressed include the guidelines must provide that the child support order is based on the noncustodial parent's earnings, income, and other evidence of ability to pay that: takes into consideration the basic subsistence needs of the noncustodial parent, and at the State's discretion, the custodial parent and children, who have their limited ability to pay by incorporating a low-income adjustment, such as a self-support reserve or some other method determined by the State. Another criteria is that it be based on specific descriptive and numeric criteria and result in a computation of the child support obligation. Another criteria is the guidelines must consider economic data on the cost of

raising children, labor market data (such as unemployment rates, employment rates, hours worked, and earnings) by occupation and skill-level for the State and local job markets, the impact of guidelines policies and amounts on custodial and noncustodial parents who have family incomes below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level, and factors that influence employment rates among noncustodial parents in compliance with child support orders.

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The guideline committee must analyze case data, gathered through sampling or other methods, on the application of and deviations from the child support guidelines, as well as the rates of default and imputed child support orders and orders determined using the low-income adjustment required under a previous paragraph of the regulation. The analysis must also include a comparison of payments on child support orders by case characteristics, including whether the order was entered by default based on imputed income, or determined using the low-income adjustment required under a previous paragraph under Federal Regulation. The analysis of the data must be used in the State's review of the child support

- guidelines to ensure that deviations from the
 guidelines are limited and the guideline amounts are
 appropriate based upon the criteria in the federal
 regulation.
 - So those are the criteria that we must now look at when we are reviewing the child support guidelines. Are there any questions?
- 8 MS. DAVIS: Jessica, I think, has a 9 question.

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- MS. DRENNAN: Do we have any definition of what the low-income adjustment means?
 - MS. BUSH: We do have a low-income adjustment in our current child support guidelines, and it's my understanding that in doing a review, obviously you have to take into account the current cost of goods, the current earnings, to determine what that low cost would be. So that may change, but we do have that in our current guidelines.
 - MS. DRENNAN: Is that the same? It's the same definition under the new guidelines you just read as ours? That's my question, is it the same definition?
- MS. BUSH: It's the Federal poverty level.

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- 1 | Repeat your question again.
- 2 MS. DRENNAN: I'm just asking about the
- 3 | low-income adjustment. Is it the same definition that
- 4 | we currently already have or is it a different
- 5 definition?
- 6 MS. BUSH: The Federal Regulation doesn't
- 7 | actually define low-income adjustment. They don't
- 8 define that term.
- 9 MS. DRENNAN: Okay.
- 10 MS. DUNN BURKS: I have a question or
- 11 | rather clarification, if that's okay.
- MS. BUSH: Yes, ma'am.
- 13 MS. DUNN BURKS: So am I understanding --
- MS. DAVIS: We need you to identify
- 15 | yourself for Anne.
- MS. DUNN BURKS: I'm sorry. I'm Karen Dunn
- 17 Burks.
- MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Karen.
- MS. DUNN BURKS: Am I to understand clearly
- 20 that there have not been any changes in eight years? I
- 21 mean, I just want to make sure. I know we reviewed it,
- 22 but within eight years, have there not been any changes
- 23 to the income?

MS. BUSH: There have -- the guidelines

have been reviewed. In 2016 there were no changes made

to the actual numerical dollar amounts. So the dollar

amount schedule was not changed. There have been text

changes.

MS. DUNN BURKS: Yes, ma'am. Okay. Thank you so much. Thank you.

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MS. DAVIS: Other questions? Any questions for anyone that is not visual that I can't see a raised hand? All right. Any more Committee members that want to comment? We will have public comments at the end. Jennifer, thank you. Any other comments you want to make before we move on to the next agenda item?

MS. BUSH: No, ma'am. Thank you.

MS. DAVIS: Thank you. The next item, we are going to ask Bob Maddox, who is the staff attorney for the Legal Division for AOC to report on the manner of our prior reviews for updating child support schedule.

MR. MADDOX: Thank you, Penny. Hopefully everybody can hear me. If you can't, just raise your hand, and I will try to speak louder. I'm going to unmute.

MS. DAVIS: That didn't work so we are going to go back, and Bob will try to speak loudly.

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MR. MADDOX: Good morning again. I'm going to try to give a little history for those of you who are probably new to the Committee. I have gone through previous meetings. I have reviewed all previous transcripts back to about 2013 to try to get some of the histories so I won't be inconsistent with what I say. But what we have done with different ways or actually the Committee has done different ways in terms of putting out what we call a request for proposal to proposed vendors to update the child support schedule. And historically, the Administrative Office of Courts has entered into an agreement with whatever vendor the Committee chose to do this update for the simple reason we are more of an administrative office and we do several agreements. So we didn't think it was appropriate for the Supreme Court itself to be entering into a contract. We thought there might be some ethical problems with that. So we decided to undertake that several years ago, and we continued to do that over the years. But like I said, all the previous transcripts back to 2004 are on our website,

1 | alacourt.gov, under Child Support Guideline Review.

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That's where I got a lot of this information, from the transcripts.

So I went and found the December 13th,
2013, Committee meeting transcript. That's where I
found a substantial overview of how we have done this
in the past, and we started a review in 1999 roughly.
We had to go to a four year review cycle, and I don't
want to go into all that. Let's take some time to go
back to see what happened. The Committee met that
every four year requirement, but I think we are back on
track now according to Jennifer Bush.

But back in November 2003, how we did this was I reached out to the Department of Finance Division of Purchasing, and they sent me a list of any entity or person that was classified in what we call a cost estimator or a consultant. And it came back with over 1,100 vendors, and we cringed because back then we didn't have email or electronic submission of these things. So we had to undertake sending an RFP by mail, regular mail, to over 1100 vendors. Now a lot of these admittedly did not deal with the specific subject matter we are dealing with here, the child support

schedule. So only one responded. We also sent the RFP back then to 29 colleges and universities in the State of Alabama with an economics department. So even back 17 years ago, we did that, sent to all the colleges and universities with economics departments.

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In addition to that, we sent the RFP to

Jane Venohr, who is currently at the Center For Policy
Research in Denver, Colorado. It was formerly called
Policy Studies, Incorporated. We also sent an RFP to
Urban Institute in Washington, DC; to an entity called
ABT Associates, Incorporated, in Cambridge,
Massachusetts; Dr. Burt S. Barnow of Baltimore,
Maryland with Johns Hopkins University; and Dr. David
M. Betson, an associate professor of economics with
Notre Dame University. These five entities or persons
were recommended to us by different entities, DHR,
whatnot, I think, to the Committee. And that's why we
sent them to those individuals back then.

So out of all these persons and entities, we only got one response back in November of 2003 from Jane Venohr with Policy Studies, Incorporated, at the time. So then once we got that, the Committee did not meet again until 2005. So there was a discussion again

how to go about doing the study. And so the Committee decided to add Dr. Mark Rogers. He has his own consulting firm, economic consulting firm in Peachtree City, Georgia.

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And the Committee asked both Dr. Venohr and Dr. Rogers to come in 2006 to give their respective study reports to the Committee. So we did use both of those individuals, and they came in 2006 to speak to the Committee.

So after that was concluded, I think the Committee decided to adopt Jane Venohr's recommended schedule, one of them, and that's the one we are under now that was adopted by the Committee in 2008 as well as the Supreme Court. And that was effective January 1st, 2009. So we are still under that schedule that was adopted in 2008, effective January 1st, 2009. So over 11 years, the schedule has not been updated.

So we fast forward to December of 2013, and we were starting to review the guidelines and schedule again. In December of 2013, I contacted the Department of Finance Division of Purchasing to try to get an updated look of vendors by cost estimate and consulting. And believe it or not, the list was down

to about 250 people back then from 1100. However, we discussed with the Committee, and again a lot of those entities did not meet the criteria for doing such a study.

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So we next sent them to all 250 people at the time, and the Committee decided to basically at that time send them to basically Jane Venohr again, Mark Rogers again, because they were the two individuals who did the study back in 2006, as well as 21 colleges and universities with economic departments. I don't know why the number went from 29 to 21. I can't remember, but I think we looked it up on Google or something and got all the colleges and universities with economic departments. And we still have that current list today, just labeled differently.

So basically it was sent to Jane Venohr,
Mark Rogers and 21 colleges and universities with
economic departments in 2014. That's when Rich Hobson
was the Administrative Director of Courts back then.
We sent a letter on August 8, 2014, with the request
for proposal with a deadline of September 30th, 2014.

So by that deadline, Dr. Mark Rogers was the only person who responded to that request for

proposal. And I will mention Dr. Jane Venohr sent an email back when that was sent out a couple of weeks after that, I think, and mentioned that they could not do it for the price we offered. I think it was up to \$20,000 in the budget for doing the study, and they said they could not do it for that low at the time. So I just wanted to make that point. That's why they did not submit a bid or study.

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So we did an agreement with Dr. Mark
Rogers. The Committee decided to go ahead and do an
agreement with Dr. Mark Rogers for \$14,000 in 2016, and
he came to a meeting both on August 26, 2016, and then
Judge Palmer mentioned December 1st, 2016, basically
presenting his schedule and his study methods. And on
December 1st, 2016, as was mentioned, the committee
voted not to revise the schedule at that time.

So that's kind of the history of how we have done in the past. I think I recommend to the Committee that we probably do the same thing we did at the last meeting to be consistent, maybe reach out to both Jane Venohr and Mark Rogers as well as the 21 colleges and universities with economic departments.

I have reached out to both Jane Venohr and

Mark Rogers, and they were still around, believe it or not, after six years. Still doing work like they did before, and I have their updated contact information if the Committee chooses to send an RFP to them. So are there any questions on that? That's all I have on that part.

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MS. DAVIS: If anyone has any question, would you raise your hand? Judge Palmer?

My only concern is with that history, Bob -- and that was excellent -- is if \$20,000 was our budget in 2014 to get somebody to respond and we only got one company to respond because at least one other person said the amount was too low, what is the budget that we are looking at now to get these companies to respond?

MR. MADDOX: Yes, ma'am. Good question. I have looked into that. And y'all may be aware or not be aware, the Administrative Office of Courts has an MOU, memorandum of understanding, with state DHR. They reimburse Title IV-D child support money to our office for various things, including an update of the child support schedule, which is put in for every fiscal year just in case this comes up in our Committee. And the

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current budget for updating the schedule is now \$20,000 1 2 as it was in 2014. So what that means is under this 3 agreement, DHR reimburses us as part of the federal 4 matching rate of 66 percent. So DHR gets -- the full 5 \$20,000 was paid to a vendor. For example, DHR would 6 reimburse us 66 percent of that \$20,000, and I have got 7 my commitment from Dr. Rich Hobson, the current Administrative Director of Courts, to pay the other 9 I'm not saying it will be the full \$20,000. It's been lower before. Like Dr. Mark Rogers' 10 11 agreement, he only proposed \$14,000, which was less 12 than the RFP amount. Do you have any other questions? 13 MS. DAVIS: I think I shared the same concern with Judge Palmer, indicating that the amount 14 that we are offering, considering inflation and the 15 16 amount of time, might be problematic. And so one of 17 the questions that I had addressed separately to Bob and he explained the matching money is that there is a 18 19 possibility we could bump up that up to amount. And so 20 I will put Jennifer on the spot for a moment. Could 2.1 you speak to the issue of the funding for the study? Jennifer, are you still on? 22

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MS. BUSH: Can you hear me?

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1 MS. DAVIS: Yes, we can now. Thank you.

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MS. BUSH: Okay. This is Jennifer Bush.

As Bob mentioned, the budget with the Administrative

Office of Courts currently includes a line item of

\$20,000 for guidelines review. It is my understanding

that that amount is just routinely placed in the

budget. I don't know that I would use a place holder,

but it is in there because we know there is a minimum

amount of money that must be expended just in the

routine course of meeting. Any increase in a budget

would have to be approved by our Commissioner; however,

it could be considered by her.

One thing that we may want to do in the RFP, in looking at the RFP, it actually lists a budget amount. We could remove the budget amount in the RFP, just send out the request for proposals, see what comes back and look at the budget at that point. We don't know if we are going to get back 10,000, 20,000, 60,000. But I propose not limiting it in the RFP and making that decision once we get the responses back.

MS. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you. So will it be possible with what I'm understanding -- I think that's probably a good solution because we have a time

crunch -- is to, if the Committee so desires, delete 1 2 the section that deals with the limitation on their 3 proposing the budget. I asked them to propose a budget 4 and see how it works with your Commissioner, and Bob 5 could mention to AOC that we may need to increase the funding in order to have more than one. And we may not 6 7 even get one if we limit it to 20,000. I think that's 8 a good solution. Does any Committee member have a 9 comment regarding the budgetary amount while we are 10 dealing with that issue first? Yes, I see a phone number. Just go ahead and identify who you are. I 11 12 can't tell from the phone who you are. Unmute it. 13 Mobile DHR, is that -- Angela, have you unmuted to 14 speak? 15

MS. CAMPBELL: Can you hear me, Penny? I didn't have a question. This is Angela.

MS. DAVIS: Okay. It's the number, the third row that's now not unmuted at the top. That's Jennifer's? Okay. I'm sorry. Let's go to the people that are visible. If you would raise your hand if you have a question regarding the budgetary discussion.

Dr. Gray? Dr. Gray, if you will unmute.

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DR. GRAY: I did, thank you. Just a

suggestion for Bob perhaps. If you think about 1 2 emailing or contacting the departments of economics, 3 chances are you are not going to get many hits. 4 thing you might think about is looking for some 5 economic outreach centers. For example, at the 6 University of Alabama, we have a center called the 7 Center for Business Economics and Research. It's run by Dr. Sam Addy. It does a lot of work in Montgomery 9 for the state and also by Dr. Ahmad Ijaz, and they do a lot of economic studies for the state of Alabama. 10 So 11 they would be a natural, I think, for this. And I think if you look at other universities, you might see 12 13 if they have some sort of outreach group like that. 14 They would be more likely to be interested in doing something like this. 15 16 MS. DAVIS: That's a good point, Dr. Gray. 17 Do you have access or could you assist Bob in identifying some of those folks? 18 19 Oh, absolutely. No problem. DR. GRAY: 20 MS. DAVIS: Then I will get you and Bob 2.1 together to work on expanding the list or maybe honing

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down the list to a little more precision in each of the

universities and colleges. Does any other Committee

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member have a suggestion for a resource from your alma mater or your friends and neighbors that you know about? I see no hands. Anyone that's on a phone? If you would, unmute yourself, if you speak.

MS. COX: Professor Davis?

MS. DAVIS: Yes.

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MS. COX: Hi, it's Amanda Cox. I just have a question. Can someone address if there are any rules or guidelines as to the broadness of how we solicit these bids or send out the RFPs? Since it's public money, are we required to notify any certain type people or anything like that? Can somebody just address that?

MS. DAVIS: Bob, can you address that, please?

MR. MADDOX: As I stated earlier, the

Committee has pretty much chosen the vendors. We did

try to reach out, like I said, to the Department of

Finance Division of Purchasing for any consultants or

cost estimators. As far as I know, the federal law or

regulations do not dictate in terms of getting vendors

or what types of vendors. We just maybe by word of

mouth or by Committee member suggestions or

- 1 recommendations, we have got these things in the past.
- 2 And I know -- I will say Jane Venohr with the Center
- 3 for Policy Research is probably the best known around
- 4 | the country. I think they have done work for about all
- 5 | 50 states on child support guideline schedules. So
- 6 | they are really reputable. That's why we usually like
- 7 | to choose that. So there is nothing in writing if
- 8 | that's the question.
- 9 MS. DAVIS: Jennifer, are you aware of any
- 10 regulations or guidance from the federal folks about
- 11 how we should select vendors?
- MS. BUSH: The Federal Regulations do not
- 13 address that.
- MS. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you. Good
- 15 | question. Other questions?
- MS. DUNN BURKS: Madam Chair, Ms. Penny, I
- 17 do not have a question. I just have a comment. I just
- 18 | want to thank the Committee and Bob --
- 19 MS. DAVIS: Identify yourself for Anne.
- 20 MS. DUNN BURKS: I'm sorry. It's Karen
- 21 Dunn Burks. Thank you. I just want to thank the
- 22 Committee and Bob. Thank you, Bob, for that. As a new
- 23 member, that was very well presented to us, and I thank

you. I don't know if I'm the only new member, but I thank you for that history. And I should have done more due diligence in looking on the child support website for that area, but I thank you for that and all the hard work that the Committee has put into this in the previous years. So I thank you for that, and I'm just going to send a personal shout out to Bob. He is awesome, and he always does a great job. So thank you for that.

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MS. DAVIS: The Committee could not function without Bob for sure. We appreciate his efforts. And obviously Brad and the Court, they do a great job. And we are certainly indebted to our IT people today for their yeoman's job. During a very busy time for the court, they are having to deal with a lot of issues. So again we certainly appreciate that. And, Karen, thank you for reminding us of the importance that we have with our staff to assist the Committee members.

Other questions or comments in general about the proposals? Now what was sent out to you as an attachment for you to review was the proposal that had been utilized in 2016. Jennifer Bush, we asked her

to look prior to the meeting to see what was still pertinent and what was not. She has discussed that a little bit. But what I think is lined through, Jennifer, is what you felt like was redundant and already covered. Can you speak to the material that was lined through in 2016?

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MS. BUSH: Yes. This is Jennifer Bush.

When you look at the RFP, it contains the Federal

Regulation 302.56 in its current state as it now

exists. And what you see that's lined through would be
the criteria that we have already addressed in the text

changes, and that would be -- take into consideration
all earnings of income of the noncustodial parent.

That is already in Rule 32 because we have a definition
of income that's very broad that includes all income.

Imputation of income is already addressed in our current Rule 32. We made the changes that are outlined, and you see struck through here. We also already addressed how parents will provide for the child's health care needs through private or public health care coverage, and we have already made the change in the text that provides that incarceration may not be treated as voluntary unemployment in

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establishing or modifying child support. So those changes have been made.

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As I'm looking -- because I do notice that in this RFP, it lists the cite as 42 U.S.C. 302.56, and it's actually 45 C.F.R. 302.56. So before that goes out, I do think we need to change that cite. Does that answer your question?

MS. DAVIS: Yes. Thank you. I think that's very helpful to both the new Committee members as well as those that were involved in the RFP that went out in 2016. So again I want to pause to give Committee members an opportunity to speak regarding the RFP draft that you received.

MR. MADDOX: On the last page, Jennifer

Bush mentioned an amount, the very last paragraph to
say "applicants should attach a copy of a budget" --

MS. McMILLAN: Anne Miller can't hear you.

MS. DAVIS: Anne, what Bob had said was on the last paragraph of the draft of the RFP that we were looking at, per Jennifer's suggestion because of our uncertainty as to the amount of money we can actually spend, that the last paragraph should be amended to read "Applicants should attach a copy of a budget,"

then deleting "not exceeding 15,000," and then beginning back with detailing the expenses. So the beginning of the sentence would read, "Applicants should attach a copy of a budget detailing the expenses involved in" and then the remaining portion of the sentence. Did you get that, Anne? Okay.

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So we are at the discussion and then eventually the voting stage of the proposal. So why don't we start with what's been suggested so far and go ahead and take a vote on that, which is to make the typographical correction on cite and the deletion of the amount in the last paragraph with the language to be as Bob has suggested. So if everyone is in favor of that suggested change, if you would, raise your hands. We will count you. Keep your hands raised. We count That's the majority. Would anyone like -- I didn't ask before. Anyone opposed, like to go on the record as being opposed? I do not see any hands. Okay. All right. Let's go back to the RFP as it stands now as amended. Is there any other discussion regarding this proposal? I see no hands so why don't we go ahead and take a vote on it. If you would, I would like to entertain a motion to accept the proposal

- as drafted and amended to be sent out to the public, to
 the entities we previously discussed. Let's have a
 show of hands. All in favor, if you would raise your
 hands and keep them up so we can count. Nineteen? We
 see 19. I guess we have a majority. Would anyone like
 to also vote who I cannot see? If you would like to do
 so and put your name on the record, then feel free to
 unmute yourself and vote that way.
- 9 MS. DUNN BURKS: Karen Dunn Burks in favor.
- 10 | MS. STEINWINDER: Katie Steinwinder in
- 11 favor.
- MS. DAVIS: It will be 21. Do we have
 anyone that is opposed to the motion? Did we get a
 second on the motion? I don't think we did. Could I
 have a second going backwards?
- MS. BLACKBURN: I second, Stephanie
 Blackburn.
- MS. DAVIS: We have one person that wants to comment on the phone that Cary is trying to figure out. Ms. McClenney, DHR, if you would unmute your phone.
- MS. McCLENNEY: Yes?
- MS. DAVIS: Did you want to speak to the

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vote?

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MS. McCLENNEY: I'm for the vote.

MS. DAVIS: All right. That would be 22 Anyone else want to vote that did not have an opportunity to do so? If so, we have 22, which is the majority. So that does pass. All right. Thank you. Because of the nature of the manner in which we are meeting, we decided to have a limited agenda for today. So our agenda was going to focus on the RFP. So does anyone -- Bob is suggesting it would be appropriate to take a vote on who they are sent out to. At this point, the suggestion has been to send them out to the two people, Jane Venohr and Mark Rogers, and to send them out to the universities and colleges in Alabama that have economic departments with Dr. Gray to assist Bob in identifying some perhaps centers or they may be called something different in those universities. the outreach, for example, to Auburn might include the economic department as well as some entity that's identified in Auburn just like Dr. Gray has identified an entity in Alabama that might be interested. there any other entities that y'all would like specifically for the committee -- for Bob to contact?

- Okay. All in favor -- do I have a motion to approve
- 2 that list of potential vendors? Judge Sherman?
- JUDGE SHERMAN: This is Judge Sherman. I
- 4 | will make that motion.
- 5 MS. DAVIS: Thank you, Judge. Do we have a
- 6 second?
- 7 JUDGE PALMER: I will second.
- MS. DAVIS: Judge Palmer was the second.
- 9 | Okay. Again, I apologize for the length of time this
- 10 takes, but if you would, raise your hands and hold them
- 11 up so we can count them. I think we have 18. Is that
- 12 -- okay. Again, if you would unmute and identify
- 13 | yourself if you would like to vote in favor.
- 14 MS. DUNN BURKS: Karen Dunn Burks in favor.
- MS. DAVIS: Thank you. You are 19.
- 16 MR. STARKEY: Greg Starkey in favor.
- MS. DAVIS: You are 20.
- 18 MS. STEINWINDER: Katie Steinwinder in
- 19 favor.
- MS. DAVIS: Thank you. You make 21.
- 21 MS. McCLENNEY: Lathesia McClenney in
- 22 favor.
- MS. DAVIS: Thank you. You make 22.

Anyone else? All those opposed, we'll start by raising your hands first. Anyone who is opposed that's on the phone? Okay. Thank you. So the motion passes unanimously so I appreciate that. Does anybody have any -- Professor Gray, Bob Maddox will be emailing you or is currently emailing you a list of colleges, and if you and he would communicate as soon as possible. Is that okay, Dr. Gray?

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MR. GRAY: I will be glad to do that.

MS. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you for your help. That will be real helpful to us. At this point, unless there is something else relating to the RFP, then we will open up the comments to the public. We had -- do we have the names of the -- the names we have so far are Marcus and who is the second one? And Sarah Booth. Is there anyone else that's joined us on Zoom besides Marcus Echols and Sarah Booth from the public that would like to speak? Okay. Since there is only two that potentially would like to speak, then we will give you ten minutes to address the Committee on any matter that you have relating to child support, the guideline. Marcus, you have spoken before. You are the first on the list so we will start with you. Again, if you

would identify yourself and any entity that you are representing so that our court reporter will have that information.

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MR. ECHOLS: And I represent Empowering
Strategies, a nonprofit organization that targets at
risk youth. But also related to this, I'm also one of
the administrators and one of the spokespersons for
www.childsupporthustle to try to educate noncustodial
parents and people on child support issues. And we
have been doing town halls all across the country. We
have done two here in Alabama. One was held at the
Richard Showers Center, and another one was held here
in Moulton, Alabama. We plan to do these town halls
because of some of the gross inequities and inhumanity.
There is tremendous amount of inhumanity to men in
these child support laws.

Now I'm not going -- I'm glad you gave me ten minutes. I just want to read through this. I hope I don't read too fast because I want this as part of the public record. Someone has to shine a light about what's really going on in this system, and the system is a beast. It's a monster, and people are foaming at the mouth and falling over each other to get this time

before. And people still were telling me to join this and talk to everyone here, and I said I would. And I'm going to hit these main points here in a second, but I had to be honest with them.

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There is absolutely no way a noncustodial parent is going to get any justice in this, and I'm talking about recommendations about some of the child support issues. There is a break-through study coming out of the University of Southern California who said child support should start off low and increase gradually as the child grows, but that doesn't work for Alabama Department of Human Resources because that's not going to maximize your funds. The only way you are going to maximize the Department of Human Resources funds is to set that child support as high as you can and spend the next 18 years trying to increase it.

So with that, I'm going to read this off.

And it's pretty basic, but here goes. "The child support enforcement laws that have been enacted in the past three years are unfair to noncustodial parents. A primary discipline within these laws is their flexibility. Due to any number of circumstances, a noncustodial parent may find their earnings decreased

due to layoff, injury, illness or many other reasons, 1 2. but the mechanism for modification of support orders is 3 very slow to respond. Now I always get the answer like 4 we've got steps you can take to get it modified. 5 Mostly in Alabama, they only send you a modification 6 chance once every six months. But those always act real slow because we are dealing with these people's money who are actually over the case. In fact, it is 9 often the case that noncustodial parents are faced with huge arrearages due to their inability to make full 10 11 payment of child support for months at a time. there is an arrears, it cannot by law be modified. 12 13 This is clearly unjust. Under current law, 14 noncustodial parents who fall behind in their child support payments can be judged criminals, even felons 15 16 and imprisoned. And a lot of them suffer post traumatic stress disorder from things like DHR's 17 favorite tactic, like shaming people, putting their 18 pictures on the web to try to shame them into 19 20 compliance, labeling them dead beats, just beating 2.1 people socially and emotionally into a corner where they can't even fight back on these issues. That's why 22 23 cameras need to be in courtrooms because of some of the

grave things we have been hearing and collecting and documenting on how these caseworkers treat people. They can treat them any kind of way, and they just get away with it. Because there is so much money being made, everybody turns a blind eye, and noncustodial parents are easy targets. They are dead beats, right? So they are easy targets. DHR has softened the public up and into what they are doing to noncustodial parents by all of these labels. Okay. This is clearly unjust, unjust. Okay. They fall behind. They can have their driver's license suspended. A lot of good that's going to do when they are trying to get to work, but then again that brings more money to the system. Maybe they will get some way to work, and that money is still going to come back to the system.

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Measures to exact the maximum possible amount from the noncustodial parents have become increasingly extreme and often violate the basic principles of human dignity and privacy upon which this country was founded. They are talking aboutposting pictures and biographies of parents with outstanding balances on the internet in an attempt to humiliate them into compliance. Millions are being spent

developing computer systems and data bases in order to locate and seize assets of dead beat parents.

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I think you guys got -- I think you were talking about you got about \$20,000 for that very process itself, and dead beat parents, when in fact the primary reason most parents fall behind is their inability to pay.

We believe at the Child Support Hustle that these measures all violate constitutionally guaranteed civil rights of tens of thousands of people, especially here in Alabama with the aggressiveness of this system, an unchecked system, an unaudited system. It is greasing a lot of pockets.

Okay. The specific right violated in the Alabama child support system -- and they are easily found. No one just wants to look at it. These rights violated are right to equal protection, due process, the prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment and arbitrary fines and penalties. These new measures that you guys are here talking about today, they are not going to help anyone. They are definitely not going to hurt the child, which is all about the child. It's their favorite catch phrase DHR uses, but that's

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just the cloak that they hide behind because you can't 1 2 go into court and talk about parental alienation. 3 Parental alienation month ends today. DHR, I never see 4 them do anything about parental alienation. So many 5 people have told us in court if they bring up parental 6 alienation, they have to file whole new separate 7 things. Where if you are going to court and you are 8 going to hide behind this mantra of it's all about the 9 children, then anything should be on the table in the child support court hearing, but that's not it. 10 11 know why you are there. You are there for the money, and child support workers have told people we are here 12 13 about the child support. So it's not about the child. That's just a lie because, if it was, the most 14 important things like this child's emotional and social 15 16 upbringing that's being destroyed by parental 17 alienation, that should be front and center, but it's The only things front and center here is Title 18 19 IV-D funding.

All the laws y'all have talking about here today -- I still have minutes left. I'm keeping up. I have a few minutes. I want to get through this, and I will answer any questions after that. I think I have

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1 | got --

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2 MS. DAVIS: Two minutes left.

3 MR. ECHOLS: I think I have a few minutes

left. I was keeping up with my minutes. How many?

MS. DAVIS: Two minutes left.

MR. ECHOLS: Can I get those back for the interruption? Okay. The reason why this is not going to work is because criminalizing parents cannot be good for the children. It drives a wedge between the parent and the child and is not only unfair to the parent but it may severely damage the self-esteem of the child.

The new laws will clog the court system. They will result in ever increasing numbers of parents with joy for participation in the children's lives. They will result in increasing of parents in history and society to hide out from what they consider a fair prosecution, and these laws that y'all are doing will result in parents being sent to prison simply for experiencing financial hardships and falling behind on support payments. They will increase divisiveness in our society, and they will further reduce our civil liberties.

Now what I wanted to ask, especially some

of these child support workers, as soon as this COVID-19 is over, you guys are seizing \$1200 from people who owe back child support, even the people who are 100 percent disabled. Now if that's not unjust, greedy and evil, I don't know what it is. So do these people get any leeway once their check is seized? guys get your funds from Social Security for seizing this money. You take the 1200 from the person. are going to receive not only the 1200 but the \$7,840 something dollars that you are going to get from Title IV-D funding. I wonder how long it's going to be after y'all seize these people's money who evidently you guys think COVID-19 and this pandemic does not affect people on child support. Y'all have hunted them down in the moment of a pandemic to seize any lifeline that they can get.

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Now I was -- I want to finish this up, if I can, with a prayer. This was written in jail by a child support person. A whole grouping of child support was writing this, sending this home. Jailers was taking this and reading it, and this is the prayer I want to end my comments with. And I appreciate you guys giving a voice to the voiceless. I feel like I

brought everything to everybody. I want to say this prayer, and that's going to be it.

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This is the child support prisoner's Oh, Great Birther and King of Every Universe, both known and unknown. Here is the son of your maid servant. Grant open ears to my prayer. You are sovereign over corruption, judicial arrogance, systems of evil intent of the hearts of men. You who presides over the known and unknown as the supreme priest of all that was, that is, and what's to come. Grant the son of your maid servant your holy divine intervention while men exalt themselves in all forms of evil judgment and arrogance. Your righteousness remains holy and just as a testament to the wickedness of corruption of arrogant men. So I will not let my spirit be troubled because I believe in the Father who also believes in me, the son of His maid servant. Cursed be those who persecute you from the root of all that is evil. For the Lord Almighty has their reward. All who do evil are shameless, but the Lord Almighty does right and is always fair. I rest assured that in my Father's house, there are many mansions and no jail cells. In the name of the Father of holiness and

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1 righteousness and evil judges forever. Amen.

2.1

Thank you for hearing me.

MS. DAVIS: Thank you. All right. We gave you a couple of extra minutes. Any questions? If you have a question, raise your hand.

MS. DUNN BURKS: I have something, Madam Chair. This is Karen Dunn Burks. Thank you. And I would like to say this, and I'm not here to shame or to say anything that's derogatory comments about the gentleman's statements. However, I cannot sit here and not say this.

It's interesting to say the voice to the voiceless however and about posting pictures and what's unjust, and not paying is unjust. And I must say this: My mother, Senator Priscilla Dunn, was very, very instrumental. I think that might have been her feeling is that she brought -- so that the pictures will be posted so that the children -- you talk about the voice of the voiceless, that they may be heard as well. So I don't want to get into that, and I appreciate your comments, sir. But I want you to know that a lot of research, a lot of depth and a lot of hard, heartfelt comments and town hall meetings. You speak of all the

researchers. I know there are two sides, but I want to let you what went into that deal as far as being posted.

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Prior to being Circuit Clerk of the Bessemer Division, I worked with DHR. I was the director over a grant of reunification. So it takes both sides. But I think that some of your comments -and I'm not here to critique those -- but went a little harsh to this Committee that I think that most of these people on the Committee are here because they want to do and make sure that it is better. But also there is that side that you have to look at the whole picture, and that picture involves the children that are not getting their due, that are not getting their pay. And that also helps upbring a child. And talk about self-esteem, a self-esteem is help providing, putting on the table, shoes on those children's feet. And in order to make the whole system work -- and I appreciate your comments, and I don't want you to think that I'm coming off of any type of way. But I could not sit here and not say that, knowing all the hard work that went into that deal. Whether or not it's used for however way that you feel it is, but it was very much

needed. And I don't know, Attorney Maddox, if that is still relevant that they have there, but my mom was very instrumental in bringing that. And I just had to say that. Thank you for the opportunity, Madam Chair.

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MS. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you. Is there any other Committee member that would like to speak or ask a question before we move on to our next public speaker? All right. The second speaker, Sarah Booth, would you like to speak? Ms. Booth, are you on? Booth, we are having difficulties getting you to be able to speak. Do you have the capabilities of using the chat room? It appears that Ms. Booth has left the Is there any other member on the public list? If you would, identify yourself. Anybody else in the public? We are going to give another 30 seconds if anybody would identify yourself if you want to speak. This is the time for comments from the public. Anyone else who hasn't had an opportunity to speak from the public? For the record, Cary or Michael, is Mrs. Booth or Ms. Booth on the phone, on the Zoom at this point? Okay. Cary has indicated that Ms. Booth is no longer on the Zoom. We'll give another 15 seconds or so to see if she is trying to reconnect.

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While we are waiting to see if she can 1 2 reconnect or she may have decided not to speak, I'm not 3 sure which, I would like to mention that we had 4 previously sent out an email regarding the next 5 meeting, which would be June 4th, so the public will be 6 aware of that. Bob Maddox reminded me and, Justice Stewart, if you are still on, if you have any insight right now, we are not yet aware of any limits relating 9 to our being able to speak in person or if we need to do it remotely. Justice Stewart, are you able to speak 10 11 to that issue at all?

JUSTICE STEWART: I'm not able to speak to it. I'm not sure why she wasn't able to get up on the phone. There is also a call-in number, I think, that we provided, which is why folks are on by phone.

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MS. DAVIS: Yes. We don't know why. While we are waiting, we were discussing the next meeting, which is June 4th. We don't know yet if it will be in person or remotely, and we wondered if you had any insight as to whether the next meeting would be remote or in person, any secret knowledge about COVID-19 that you would like to share with the world?

JUSTICE STEWART: I apologize. I

misunderstood your question. I was trying to figure out how to turn myself back on. I would say the chances are very good that we can meet in person. We will most likely have to obey by the social distancing rules. So probably could use the Mezzanine classroom that's fairly large to space everybody out with, just depending on how many members of the public show up, but that would be my anticipation how we could do that. I think that the Supreme Court is probably going to open up the courthouses for in-court hearings as long as they comply with the ten person rule on May 15th. So June 4th would clearly be past that time.

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MS. DAVIS: Okay. So I know we are asking you to project into the future. But if we have more than ten people on the Committee, then could we still -- could the Committee meet with more than ten people or is that something we need to address later? I guess it would depend on how the order is written at that time.

JUSTICE STEWART: I don't know that the order really applies to us because we are not court proceedings, but my read of the Governor's safer at home order would be that only ten of us could be

congregated in a space together even with the social distancing. That was what Dr. Harris told the Court yesterday as far as application to a courtroom. So --

MS. DAVIS: We may wind up with a combination of in person and Zoom, if there is a limitation.

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DUSTICE STEWART: Yes. Dr. Harris
explained that they are trying to go off of the Federal
guidelines. And phase one of the Federal guidelines,
the Gate Post Requirements, Alabama actually hasn't
even met yet, and phase one is the ten person
restriction. Phase two, which we are a long way from,
is a 50 person restriction so that we can anticipate
that.

MS. DAVIS: That's helpful. Thank you. I assume that as we get closer to time, we will let the Committee know. And, Justice Stewart, if we wind up doing another remote or something that's different, I assume you would be able to do as you did before and get an order from the Court, revisiting the order and it's for this meeting only in terms of video conferencing.

JUSTICE STEWART: Yeah. It is specific,

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1 but yeah. We could definitely do that.

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MS. DAVIS: Okay. Thank you. Does anyone have any questions? Cary, just to confirm, we do not have any more attempts by Ms. Booth to join us?

MS. McMILLAN: We do not.

MS. DAVIS: So the record will reflect that Ms. Booth is not trying to contact us again, been unable to if she has tried. But we have no indications that she is trying at this point.

Committee members. So is there any -- just for the wrap-up before we adjourn, are there any questions or concerns that as Committee members you would like for us to address at the next meeting or prior to the next meeting so we could send out to the public? Anyone? And if the Court, Justice Stewart, has anything that they would like for us to put on the agenda for the June 4th meeting, then we will be sending that out within a few weeks. Any other comments from the Committee?

I thank you all for your participation and for your patience as we try to work through this Zoom process. I think it's been very helpful and appreciate

CERTIFICATE

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I hereby certify that the above and foregoing proceeding was taken down by me by stenographic means, and that the questions and answers therein were produced in transcript form by computer aid under my supervision, and that the foregoing represents, to the best of my ability, a true and correct transcript of the proceedings occurring on said date at said time.

I further certify that I am neither of counsel nor of kin to the parties to the action; nor am I in anywise interested in the result of said case.

Signed the 13th day of May, 2020.

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/s/ Anne E. Miller

ACCR #486

Expires 9/30/20

My commission expires 11/19/23

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