

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
OF
THE NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT
COMMISSION ON CHILDREN IN THE COURTS**

June 12, 2015

The regular meeting of the Nebraska Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts was called to order at the Nebraska State Bar Association at 635 S. 14th Street in Lincoln, Nebraska, on Friday, June 12, 2015, at 9:00 a.m., with co-chairmen Hon. Everett O. Inbody and Hon. Douglas F. Johnson presiding.

Roll call was taken, as follows:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ellen Brokofsky; Linda Cox (for Kim Hawekotte, FCRO); Hon. Curtis Evans; Hon. Larry Gendler; Hon. Thomas Harmon; Hon. Everett O. Inbody (Co-chair); Hon. Douglas F. Johnson (Co-chair); Hon. Anne Paine; Hon. Michael Piccolo; Hon. Gary Randall; Hon. Randin Roland; Hon. Patrick Runge; Hon. Linda Senff; Lynnette Boyle; Christine Costantakos; Marsha Fangmeyer; Annette Farnan; Bob Goodwin; Ashley Harlow; Carla Heathershaw-Risko; Sarah Helvey; Josh Henningsen (for Sen. Seiler); Corrie Kielty; Joselyn Luedtke (for Sen. Campbell); Carole McMahon-Boies; Kathy Moore; Kathy Olson; Amy Peters; Mary Jo Pankoke; Courtney Phillips; Amy Peters; Liz Neeley; Julie Rogers; Dick Stafford; Corey Steel; Juliet Summers (for Carolyn Rooker, Voices for Children); Elizabeth Waterman.

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Hon. Vernon Daniels; Hon. Rachel Daugherty; Hon. Michael Heavican; Hon. Jodi Nelson; Hon. Linda Porter; Hon. Kenneth Vampola; Sen. Bob Krist; Tony Green; Alicia Henderson; Rebecca Harling .

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kari Rumbaugh [**State Probation**]; Debra Denny, [**Administrative Office of the Courts**]; Nick Juliano [**Crossover Youth Proactive Model Co-chair**]; Katie McLeese Stephenson, [**Nebraska Court Improvement Director**]; Kelly Engquist [**Nebraska Court Improvement**]; Sarah Frankel [**Nebraska Court Improvement**]; Robert McEwen, [**Nebraska Appleseed**].

Minutes of the December 5, 2014, meeting were approved by the Commission.

I. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

➤ **Juvenile Justice Reform Updates (Ellen Brokofsky)**

Ellen Brokofsky, Administrator of State Probation, indicated that June 30, 2015, marks the one-year anniversary of the juvenile justice reform effort. She reported that the Office of Probation Administration (OPA) still has serious concerns regarding the lack of foster homes, especially in the western region of the State, as well as issues with matching the right services because there is not enough infrastructure to perform evaluations in some areas. She noted that it is likely to take a long time and a lot of cooperation between various entities working together to make that happen.

Kari Rumbaugh, of OPA, discussed in detail the *Probation Juvenile Justice Reform Efforts* dated May, 2015, a document disseminated to all Commission members which looks at the juvenile justice

reform effort under Probation Administration. She explained that the document is anticipated to grow over time and gave an update regarding the four levels outlined within the document: Intake and Detention Alternatives; Pre-adjudication and Investigations; Case Management and Services; and Re-entry. She also discussed the fact that there has been great collaboration with other groups, agencies, and institutions.

➤ **Update on NDHHS**

Courtney Phillips, the new executive director of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, was introduced to the Commission. She stated that the agency will be tracking the impact upon the agency of bills from the current legislative session. HHS is in the process of preparing for the federal CFS review. The agency is also starting the process of exploring where it invests its resources, and examining whether it is investing in the right places.

There are vacancies in all the division director positions, except for the Medicaid division which has a permanent director in place. Ms. Phillips noted that she is anxious to get these positions filled with the right persons who can bring change to the agency's teams and hopes to solidify the positions in June and July.

She stated that a "culture change" needs to occur within the agency, as historically the agency has worked only internally with one another in terms of how the agency brings others to the table. She commented on the 1-year contract extension between the agency and Nebraska Families Collaborative, noting that it is important that the agency and the contractor work together during this period. She stated that unfortunately, at times, the agency and the contractor have been pitted against one another, with the result that neither is being as successful as it could be. Phillips explained that it is her goal that the agency and the contractor work well together to serve children. There is a need to shift the focus away from whether the agency survives or whether the contractor survives, and to start working together to help children flourish. One of her goals during the next year is to make sure that the agency's teams and the NFC teams work together, changing the concept of how the agency and the contractor interact with one another, regardless of whether case management is accomplished through privatization or in-house.

She indicated that she wants to try to improve the agency's recruitment, development, and retention of case managers. She stated that the turnover rate for HHS case workers is now over 30%, an all-time high, noting that very few social work graduates are choosing to work for the State, which could lead to the possibility of future shortages of case workers. She stated that the agency's case workers work very hard but receive only entry-level wages in terms of professional capacity. In addition, Phillips explained that it can be an intimidating experience for new case workers to go into the courtroom. She asked for help from Commissioners, judges, attorneys, suggesting that they uplift and mentor case workers. She suggested that if there are criticisms, to pull the case managers aside to convey that information, but also to provide them with positive reinforcement by letting them know when they have done something well.

➤ **Update: Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Legislation—Sarah Helvey and Juliet Summers**

Sarah Helvey, of Nebraska Appleseed, reported on legislative bills enacted in 2015 that impact child welfare cases:

- **LB243**, creating a pilot project for “family finding” within at least two service areas of the State; expanding eligibility for participation in the Bridges to Independence Act to juveniles age 16 who are in a guardianship; discussing further clarification of the term “independence hearing” as the already-existing last court hearing before juvenile court jurisdiction is terminated under §43-247(3)(a) in order to address the young adult’s goals with the juvenile court, to advise him or her about the program, and the right to an attorney; confidentiality provisions that apply to all pleadings, filings documents reports and the proceedings unless waived.
- **LB566**, effectuating changes to Nebraska’s ICWA laws, including clarifications relating to active efforts, notice, best interests of the child, qualified expert witnesses, and placement preferences.
- **LB292**, effectuating changes to the Central Registry records.
- **LB 296**, relating to notice requirements to relatives or parent of sibling when child is removed from the home.

Juliet Summers, of Voices for Children, reported on legislative bills enacted in 2015 that impact juvenile justice cases.

- **LB265**, expanding FCRO oversight to children placed out of home in probation cases; as well as children removed and subsequently returned to the home; creation of a committee to study data collection by different agencies regarding juveniles in order to track information on child and family outcomes and family outcomes; unsealing of records by judges for purposes of making determinations to transfer cases
- **LB 482**, regarding status offenders, including but not limited to prohibition against fingerprinting; placement in detention facilities and use of restraints; reasonable efforts to refer juvenile and family to community services prior to filing petitions.
- **LB 605**, suspending, rather than terminating, Medicaid for detained youth.

➤ **Court Implementation of Bridges to Independence (Sarah Helvey)**

Since the Bridges to Independence program began on October 1, 2014, and as of May, 2015, 116 young adults have become enrolled in the program, including 64% in Omaha area, and 46% in remainder of the State. The FCRO has completed 61 reviews of Bridges cases from February to May, 2015. The Bridges advisory committee recently created a work-group to examine expanding the program to include young adults within the juvenile justice population.

➤ **Youth Impact (Judge Johnson and Nick Juliano)**

Judge Johnson commended Nick Juliano for his work on the Project. **Co-chair Nick Juliano**, explained that Youth Impact in Douglas County, which is really a branding of the Crossover Youth Project practice model, will complete its 3rd year on November 1, 2015. Youth Impact is now being replicated in other jurisdictions within the State. Commissioners were provided with a handout entitled, “*Youth Impact of Douglas County*” a snapshot of data over the first couple of years of Youth Impact.

Juliano explained that Youth Impact is a unique public-private partnership that operates under a memorandum of understanding and includes support from the Nebraska Supreme Court and the judicial branch, NDHHS, county and state probation, and the Douglas County Attorney’s office, and also includes support from private agencies such as Project Harmony, Boys Town, Nebraska Families Collaborative, the Nebraska Family Support Network, and Project Everlast.

Youth Impact attempts to identify juveniles who are crossing over from child welfare cases into the juvenile justice system. From November 1, 2012, through January 31, 2015, 408 youth were identified as meeting the definition for Youth Impact. Team meetings that occur once a month at the Juvenile Assessment Center are facilitated by Project Harmony. These team meetings involve the youth and his or her family or, if the youth is a current ward in an out-of-home placement, can sometimes include the youth’s foster parents or therapist. Juliano stated that he is not aware of any other 1184-type of team meeting that includes the youth and the family.

According to Juliano, 91% of the time, under Youth Impact, the county attorney has accepted the recommendation made during the team meeting, electing to do something other than file on the youth. While this is not the primary purpose of Youth Impact, it does represent an outcome of information-sharing, i.e., conveying better information to the county attorney much sooner in the legal process. The county attorney may choose to dispose of the matter via nolle pros; or use traditional diversion; or if it is really a child welfare case, to request Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC) to provide the needed services and more intensive case management. NFC currently is training its staff to provide much better case-planning coordination in court so that the decision and the case plan that is developed reflects the child welfare issues as well as the juvenile justice issues. Juveniles are having open 3(a) and 3(a) cases closed within 12 months.

Nationally, Nick and Judge Johnson have been asked to join the “Robert F. Kennedy Action Court” on the Juvenile Justice Resource Center to represent Douglas County within that group.

➤ **Guardian ad Litem Subcommittee (Chris Costantakos)**

Chris Costantakos reported that LB15, which became effective upon enactment, required the Nebraska Supreme Court to adopt court rules for guardians ad litem by July 1, 2015. The Nebraska Supreme Court asked the Guardian ad Litem Subcommittee to review the existing “Guidelines for Guardians ad Litem for Juveniles in Juvenile Court Proceedings” and the standardized guardian ad litem report form once again to ascertain if the Subcommittee had any major recommendations or suggested changes to the Guidelines or the report form. The subcommittee recommended that the standardized report form be revised to insure that a narrative report to be included in the form and

that has been done. The Supreme Court posted the proposed court rules for guardian ad litem on its website for public comment, with a deadline for public comment by June 15, 2015. The Guardian ad Litem Subcommittee has been working on various aspects to assist with the development of curriculum for online training modules for the annual Guardian ad Litem training requirement. These include an examination of who the guardian ad litem should interview or consult; as well as what documents should the guardian ad litem review in connection with a given case.

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Handouts were provided to participants in the form of the existing "Guidelines for Guardians ad Litem for Juveniles in Juvenile Court Proceedings" adopted by the Nebraska Supreme Court in 2007.

➤ **Coordination Between District and Juvenile Courts to Achieve Permanency (Judge Johnson)**

Judge Johnson related that through his experiences in the National Council of Family and Juvenile Court Judges (NCJFCJ), he has been involved in systems collaboration and improvement with the focus upon how to be of service to the children and the families who come before the courts. He stated that for several years, he has approached the Chief Justices of the Nebraska Supreme Court with an inquiry as to their thoughts about the creation of a family court. He also referred to the fact during the last legislative session, Sen. Krist had introduced a bill expressing legislative intent that the Supreme Court create a family court pilot project in Douglas County [LB 502], but opted not to move forward on the bill, preferring instead an interim study on the topic.

Judge Johnson stated that he believes there is interest in moving toward a study regarding the creation of a family court to examine what is involved and how it would work. He itemized all of the areas of juvenile court jurisdiction under Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-247, pointing out that in some respects, the juvenile court already is operating as a family court to the extent that it handles matters including juvenile justice, child welfare, terminations, guardianship, paternity determinations, child support, dissolution of marriage and modifications, and domestic violence issues. Judge Johnson cited examples of how one family actually can become involved in different courts within Nebraska over multiple family issues. He pointed out that a family court more truly reflects the concept of "one court—one family," which is a principle promoted by the NCJFCJ.

Corey Steel proposed that the Nebraska Supreme Court create a new subcommittee within the Commission to study the concept of family court in order to give the Nebraska Legislature some recommendations before it commences the 2016 legislative session. He suggested that a limited pilot project might be possible. He has contact the National Center for State Courts and indicated that there is some potential for NCSC to assist with the drafting of some kind of outline that could be given to the Legislature to apprise it of what would be required for the creation of a family court. A sign-up sheet

was circulated among Commission members who would be interested in serving on this proposed subcommittee.

Motion: *To recommend to the Supreme Court that a subcommittee be created immediately within the Nebraska Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts to study family court issues, and if accepted, that said subcommittee to be comprised of those individuals who volunteered to serve on such subcommittee at the June 12, 2015, meeting of the Nebraska Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts.*

(Movant: Marsha Fangmeyer)

Motion passed by unanimous vote on June 12, 2015.

➤ **Juvenile Court Conferencing—(Judge Piccolo and Deborah Denny)**

Deborah Denny reminded Commissioners that one year ago, LB464 shifted funding for child welfare conferencing and juvenile justice conferencing from Health and Human Services to the State Court Administrator’s office. As of July 1, 2014, all child welfare conferencing is paid for through the State Office of Dispute Resolution (ODR), while juvenile justice conferencing is paid for through either the ODR or State Probation (OPA). Presently, the primary providers of mediation/conferencing in these cases are the 6 mediation centers in Nebraska which contract with the ODR. The extent to which mediation/conferencing is being utilized can be measured through the Justice system by means of a coding system used by the court clerks in order that Justice can track the fact that a specific type of mediation/conferencing has been ordered by the court in a specific case. In addition, the mediation centers also use a court transmittal form to provide a brief report back to the court as to whether the mediation/conference took place with the consequent outcomes. The “Bench Card: Child Welfare/Juvenile Justice Conferencing” was circulated to Commission members which contain some sample language that can be used in court orders.

➤ **Improving Education Outcomes of Children in Foster Care (Judge Gendler)**

Judge Gendler announced that the finalization of the educational court report form marked the conclusion of the work of this subcommittee. The Office of Probation Administration has incorporated the form as a part of its pre-disposition report, as well as NFC and HHS, both of which are also using the education report form as a part of its case plan and court report. The form can be accessed on the “Through the Eyes of Child” website.

The Subcommittee took on the additional responsibility of addressing the “Notice of Change of Placement” form to insure that it reflects educational best interest considerations. **Carla Heathershaw-Risko** noted that HHS formed an internal subcommittee to look at the educational report in connection with the work of this Subcommittee. She explained that Nebraska law requires that when a child is placed in foster care, the child must remain in his or her home school unless it is determined that it is not in child’s best interest to stay there. HHS has developed a worksheet, i.e., “Best Interest Consideration for the Change of Schools Instruction Sheet” for use by case workers to help them assess the child’s best interest when a transfer of schools is proposed in connection with a change in the child’s placement. The subcommittee has amended the Notice of Change of Placement form to indicate on the form whether the child’s school will be changed so that the

judge, the guardian ad litem, county attorney, and all parties will be apprised of this fact before the placement is changed. The “Best Interest Consideration for the Change of Schools Instruction Sheet” was provided to Commissioners.

➤ **Parenting Act Subcommittee (Judge Randall and Judge Piccolo)**

Judge Randall reported that the Parenting Act Subcommittee was created in June, 2014, for the purpose of addressing the courts’ implementation of Nebraska’s Parenting Act as it affects parents and children. He reported that the National Center for State Courts has been in Nebraska interviewing judges, and practitioners who represent parties in cases, looking at 600 State court domestic custody cases identified in the Justice system.

In 2013, Nebraska conducted its own study of 392 cases, because the Chief Justice and the senators wanted information regarding child custody and how that was being awarded through the State courts, specifically considering the presumption of joint custody vs. the best-interest-of- the child standard.

Judge Randall stated that a judicial review panel comprised of some of the Subcommittee members was formed to examine and edit the original results of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) draft of its “National Center for State Courts Parenting Act Evaluation Report,” a study of 600 custody cases in Nebraska’s State courts. The judicial review panel sent the edited draft back to the NCSC with comments, specifically requesting among other things, that the Center cast the report in language more understandable to non-researchers such as judges and litigators. It is anticipated that the Center will submit its revised report back to the Subcommittee by July 1, 2015, after which the entire subcommittee plans to meet on July 24 and send the Subcommittee’s proposed edits, along with those of its own judicial review panel, back to the NCSC. The Subcommittee hopes that the final product will be available to distribute in the early Fall of 2015.

Judge Randall stated that initial results and preliminary findings are positive, indicating that in many ways, the Parenting Act, *is* important in keeping children out of the center of conflict in actions in the State of Nebraska. He noted some areas in which improvement is needed, such as the online parent education which is not interactive, and seems to be not as well-liked or as efficient as an in-person education program. However, the population of the State is such that in-person training cannot be accommodated everywhere at this time. Also, the parenting brochure that has been handed out for a number of years might not be as effective as it could be, and might be in need of revision.

Kathy Bigsby-Moore indicated that the other preliminary findings relate more to the court process and proceedings. Bigsby-Moore noted that the limitation of the case study is that it is difficult to know what actually existed before the court vs. the extent to which court records reflect the same. She suggested it will be important to take some of these “question marks” and discuss them after the final report is issued by the NCSC. She expressed the hope that after the NCSC report is released, further analysis by the Subcommittee might provide guidance for developing court rules, or whatever the Commission thinks might improve matters under the Parenting Act.

Judge Piccolo expressed that the Subcommittee has experienced some frustration in that it already has reviewed three or four drafts of the NCSC report but is still involved in the effort. Issuance of the final report has been delayed not because of the Subcommittee's efforts, but due to some research problems on NCSC's end. He emphasized that the purpose of the Subcommittee's review and edits of the report is not to alter or change the integrity of the study itself, but rather to address some grammatical issues, and other aspects such as the accuracy of the NCSC's assumptions regarding certain matters, such as discovery procedures. He stated that the Subcommittee hopes to present its recommendations to the Commission in order to decide how the Subcommittee's work on implementing the Parenting Act should go forward.

Judge Randall also noted that while statutory law requires that the temporary custody affidavit designed for purposes of the Parenting Act should be filed in custody cases, this has not been done uniformly throughout the State. He explained that the process of temporary custody is perceived as giving a litigant the edge in a custody battle and that the courts have not been very transparent in this process, by failing to require parties to use the required Supreme Court's form affidavit, rather than file multiple affidavits of their own.

He also reported that the Child Support Commission met this year and is examining the presumption of where the child is going to spend time, as a factor of calculating child-support. According to Judge Randall, the Child Support Commission is proposing that 109 days, rather than 143 days, be sufficient to trigger the joint custody calculation, but parents must show an accounting of their expenses.

A written report of regarding the Subcommittee's work was handed out to Commissioners.

➤ **Tribal and State Court Collaboration Subcommittee (Judge Runge)**

Judge Runge discussed the possibility of creating a clearinghouse for practitioners and others to access information when questions about tribal-State relations arise in various cases. He stated that matters are somewhat in the preliminary stages of communication, and an initial level of mistrust was encountered from the tribal side. He discussed the need to work together between the tribal courts and protective services, specifically having trainings between tribal and State child protective agencies to start breaking down the barriers between those two entities. He noted that the Omaha tribe just obtained a new chief judge and indicated that he would like to wait a couple of months to allow that judge to get his feet on the ground before establishing contact with reference to the Subcommittee.

➤ **Guardianship Subcommittee (Judge Harmon)**

Judge Harmon identified what he sees as a consistent issue throughout both the probate court and juvenile court guardianships, namely, the 2-fold requirement that guardians must meet: 1) the educational component, and 2) the responsibility that guardians and conservators report back to the court as to what they have done in order to benefit their wards, how they are keeping contact with the ward, and the condition of the ward educationally, psychologically, and medically. This has become a more difficult issue for those serving in a foster/adoptive parent situation, as often they must deal with specific and unique needs of the child not faced by general guardians.

He discussed the need for effective training in the educational component and the guardianship reporting requirement for foster parents who wish to become guardians, and the lack of any viable training program at this time.

All responsibility for the education and training of guardians now falls under the responsibility of the Office of Public Guardian. Each of the assistant or associate public guardians will be responsible for providing training programs in the various jurisdiction where they exist.

Judge Harmon sees this as presenting a unique opportunity to address various issues. He has met with and conveyed to the Public Guardian the needs of the foster-adopt parents as conveyed to Judge Harmon by the juvenile court judges and the very specific needs of the foster-adoptive parents when juvenile court guardianships are established. He indicated that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. As a specific example, he referred to the fact that there is an influx in Douglas County of persons from a variety of other countries. He pointed out that any current training programs will need to accommodate foreigners who cannot speak English, as there are times when show-cause orders are issued in many cases for non-English speaking guardians. Judge Harmon asserted that guardianship training programs must expand to accommodate ethnicity in order to address problems that might arise for no other reason than that the guardians do not understand the process due to lack of communication.

He stated that he and Sheryl Connelly have been invited by the Public Guardian to participate in the educational component when the Public Guardian's office is conducting any trainings in the community. He asked Commission members to let him know if they have specific suggestions or ideas regarding the training of guardians.

Judge Gendler pointed out that there are no standardized rules to govern juvenile court guardianships, there are no standardized rules for reporting to the court by the guardian, nor is there any uniformity as to whether juvenile court guardianships are to be reviewed on a regular basis by the juvenile court, and that different judges tend to do it differently. He proposed that the Commission ought to be making recommendations in these areas. **Judge Johnson** offered to take to the Supreme Court the idea of adopting standards for guardianships that are established in the juvenile court.

Carole McMahon-Boies indicated that the new online guardian ad litem training program might suggest a model for developing a similar distance-learning program to train legal guardians for children involved in juvenile court.

➤ **Case Progression Standards in juvenile Justice Cases (Judge Gendler)**

Judge Gendler referred to the fact that about 6 years ago, a Subcommittee on Case Progression Standards existed within the Commission. He suggested that this might be a good time to revisit the idea of whether to revive that Subcommittee. There was a general discussion among Commission members regarding the issue. **Judge Inbody** requested that Minutes of a past meeting be consulted to ascertain the prior efforts of that Subcommittee in order to move forward with the discussion at the next meeting.

➤ **Best Practices for Child Welfare Filings/Discussions**

Judge Inbody announced that the Supreme Court has requested that the Commission consider creating a new subcommittee to address the issue of “Case Classification/Statistics” regarding the filing of juvenile court cases. Judge Inbody explained that some Nebraska counties file one juvenile petition and list all children in the same family within one case; but in other counties, a separate petition is filed for each individual child, although these petitions may be consolidated for purposes of trials, hearings, and appeals. This impacts the statistics maintained the courts. For example, some counties might show the filing of five separate cases, while other counties show the filing of only one case that includes 5 children. Judge Inbody stated that he would like this new Subcommittee to work with the National Center for State Courts as well as the Juvenile and Family Court Foundation to develop a plan for counting cases the same way throughout the State. A sign-up sheet was circulated for Commission members to sign-up to work on the new subcommittee.

Corey Steel explained that because the State Court Administrator’s Office produces data, that data needs to be uniform in order to accurately tell the story of the courts. Steel pointed out that at this point in time, when such report is produced it needs to be accompanied by a caveat explaining that a certain county counts cases in this way, while another county does it another way. He acknowledged that he does not have a particular preference in the way that cases are counted, but stressed the need to be uniform in the manner that court data is collected. He stated that the Justice system will be adjusted to whatever method of counting cases is recommended and approved.

➤ **Douglas County Juvenile Court Trauma Audit (Judge Johnson)**

Judge Johnson reminded Commissioners that the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) is about to conduct a trauma audit in early July, 2015, in Douglas County. He explained that a trauma audit is designed to explore the conditions that promote healing for injured persons and families across the domains of environment, practice and policy within a system. The trauma audit will involve a site-visit to Douglas County by NCJFCJ staff members, who will perform observations, file reviews, and interviews with both professionals and consumers of the court system, and will also conduct a training event while in Omaha. Upon completion of the audit, the NCJFCJ will issue a written a report outlining its impressions and recommendations to help the courts become more trauma-informed. The guidebook, “Preparing for a Trauma Consultation in Your Juvenile and Family Court” prepared by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges,” as well as letters to Judge Johnson from Shawn Marsh, Ph.D. of the National Council, were distributed to Commissioners.

➤ **Court-ordered Language for Independent Living Cases**

A handout regarding Pub. Law 113-183, *“Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act,”* was distributed to Commissioners. This law requires additional court findings for youth whose permanency objective has been identified as “Another Planned Permanency Living Arrangement (“APPLA”), which essentially refers to state wards whose permanency objective is Independent Living. Procedures must be implemented to ensure that the court conducting the permanency hearing asks the juvenile about his/her desired permanency outcome and also makes a judicial determination at each permanency hearing for the child, documenting compelling reasons why it is not in the juvenile’s best interest to be placed permanently with a parent, relative, or in a guardianship or adoptive placement. The handout included a proposed form for a permanency review order reflecting language to comply with federal requirements.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Costantakos
Acting Secretary

**NEXT COMMISSION MEETING:
December 4, 2015**