

FOCB Advisory Committee Meeting – Friday, May 16, 2014

Call to Order

Administrative Matters

Minutes from November 2013 were approved by the Committee.

New Administrative Staff Introduction

Liz is the new FOCB staff support for the FOCB Advisory Committee. She is taking Dan's place.

New Member Introduction

Steven – absent due to an injury. He looks forward to meeting everyone at the next meeting.

Paul – new FOCB Management Analyst. He has been with the FOCB for about a month; he used to be in legislative liaison's office at DHS for 2 years. He attended Valparaiso Law School in Indiana.

Human Services Representative Vacancy

Looking for suggestions; Liz has not received any names at this point. No real preference as to public or private sector. Previous suggestion was that Human Services meant someone who is more clinical in nature, someone not necessarily on front lines, but knows about child support/parenting time. If you have ideas, e-mail Liz.

Public Comment – no requests received

Correspondence (since November 2013)

The FOCB received correspondence in March 2014 from a litigant with a Shiawassee County case. Her main issue is with her child support amount not being adequate. She has 3 children, and her ex is not contributing much financially; she barely makes enough to make ends meet and wants higher child support amount. The litigant believes FOC should be required to advocate for custodial parent/children – she wants to see change in policy to reflect this. The FOCB explained that she needs to petition court for modified child support amount and that the local FOC offices cannot advocate for either party.

Old Business

Responsible Father Registry (HB 4659) Update

Kelly was unable to attend today's meeting and will hopefully provide the Committee with an update at the August meeting.

Limited English Proficiency Update

Liz – all courts have limited English proficiency (LEP) plans; SCAO has a listing of approved interpreters on its website and is continuing to assist courts in need of interpreting services. The Foreign Language Board of Review has started meeting and will be making recommendations to SCAO and MSC on interpreter ethics and standards for interpreters. Currently there are three interpreter classifications: certified, qualified, noncertified/nonqualified. Robin Eagleson and Stacy Westra from Trial Court Services are the contact people for LEP.

New Business

FOCB Update

Parenting Time and Custody Investigations - Program and Manuals

Liz and Paul have starting to review/revise the parenting time and custody investigation manuals. They are also looking at different software/technology available for use more on court side. There is software for parents to use (Our Family Wizard, Custody Xchange), but FOCB is looking to gauge interest from the courts for use of technology that would incorporate that calendar idea and a new investigation tool that would automate custody/parenting time recommendations. FOCB is hoping to take some of the emotion out of the investigation process; but again, this tool would only propose a recommendation, not an order.

The Committee stressed that while all parenting time/custody factors may be in the program, there should be a way to evaluate other factors, such as mental illness. The Committee liked the idea of the parties becoming a parent and not an ex by removing the emotion from the data collection, but commented that this would only be used as a recommendation tool – courts like to gauge the person's truthfulness during the investigation process by body language, demeanor, etc.

The FOCB asked if any courts were currently using parenting time software and what the courts experiences were, if any. The Committee noted a few courts use the program, and asked if we can host a demonstration/presentation of one of the calendar programs at the next Committee meeting. Our Family Wizard has a representative that works with the State Bar of Michigan – Family Law division that may be able to assist in a demonstration.

The targeted release for the model guidelines is this fall, but the release for the software is indefinite. When the software is ready, the FOCB will approach a county for a pilot project and report back to the Committee.

Uniform Support Order (USO) changes and the Child Support Formula–

The most recent changes to the USO will allow FOC's to do away with emancipation letters, as there will be a requirement for a date certain ending the support obligation. FOCB will offer trainings when finalized this summer, if necessary. FOCB will have version of new USO at next meeting. Furthermore,

all support deviations will now be recorded in writing. There will be an attachment where judge/referee says deviation will have an addendum by reference – not just an oral record. The MCSF committee starting to meet for next edition – proposed changes can be emailed to Bill Bartels or MCSF@courts.mi.gov.

Legislative Update

FOCB provided Committee members with a chart with proposed legislative changes, the bill's current status, and possible impact on the child support program. This legislative update will be mailed out to members prior to committee meetings in the future.

Per Lynn, there has been a package of bills presented to the legislature proposed by the Program Leadership Group (PLG). Some of the proposed bills attempt to improve business processes in the program, while others are small technical fixes. Lynn went over the PLG package with the Committee. The concern proposed by the attorneys in the meeting was the possible due process issues that surround the DNA testing legislation.

Closing

Members Closing

Final Public Comment on Matters Not Before the Committee

Future Meeting Dates

August 15, 2014
November 21, 2014

February 20, 2015
May 15, 2015
August 21, 2015
November 20, 2015