

**DOMESTIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 6, 2002**

**PRESENT:**

Hon. Karen Adam  
Rene Bartos  
Sid Buckman  
Kat Cooper  
Frank Costanzo  
Hon. Kathi Foster  
Gordon Gunnell  
Jennifer Jordan

David Norton  
Steve Phinney  
Beth Rosenberg  
Janet Scheiderer  
Ellen Seaborne  
Steve Wolfson  
Daniella Yaloz  
Jeffrey Zimmerman

**NOT PRESENT:**

Hon. Karen Johnson  
(Haught)  
Ella Maley  
Hon. Dale Nielson  
Hon. David Petersen

Ray Rivas (for Hon. Alma Jennings)  
  
Kelly Spence  
Debbora Woods-Schmitt  
Brian Yee

**GUESTS:**

Paul Geisheker  
Marianne Hardy  
Georgly Rosenfeld

Parent  
House of Representatives  
PIP presenter

**STAFF:**

Megan Hunter  
Deborah Orr

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 a.m. by Senator Hartley with a quorum present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The October 18, 2002 minutes were approved on a unanimous vote.

## **KIDSFIRST – HAWAII DIVORCE EDUCATION**

The Education/Prevention workgroup of this committee has studied various children's divorce programs throughout the country. The program that held particular interest to the workgroup was Hawaii's "KidsFirst" program. The program coordinator and a presenter were invited to share their program with the full committee at this meeting.

### *Program Coordinator*

Charlene Anaya, J.D., KidsFirst Program Coordinator, shared the goals, focus and parameters of the program. Children between the ages of 6-18 and parents are required to attend the 2-hour program. A \$60 fee is charged of which \$35 subsidizes the class and \$25 is allocated to the indigent fund. The primary goals are attitudinal change, decreasing conflict and helping parents understand what their children may be experiencing during the separation/divorce process.

Classes are held in the courtroom. Initially, a family court judge provides an overview of the program and the effects of divorce on children and the family. Children are then separated into age-specific groups while the parents remain with the judge who provides a stern lecture. Young children are provided with age-appropriate activities designed to help them express their feelings and understand more about what is happening to the family. Older children participate in a mock trial designed to help them understand how the system works and the difficult decisions that must be made by the court in family law cases.

The judge also lectures parents against domestic violence; then a qualified parent education presenter teaches the remainder of time in a similar manner to the program used in Arizona.

The operational challenges revolve mostly around funding; the program has been running about \$8000 in the red for some time. They are not able to provide childcare for children under age six. Occasionally, parties arrive intoxicated, some have language barriers or are hearing impaired.

Exit surveys are used as an evaluation tool but a better evaluation method is currently under development.

### *Program Presenter*

Dr. Marvin Acklin presented the KidsFirst material through an actual class demonstration. He explained the effects of divorce on children and families, the four types of divorce, legal, social, economic, and emotional. He then delved into the effects of conflict on children and spoke to parents on how to observe and evaluate their own children during and after the divorce process.

## **INTEGRATED FAMILY COURT (IFC)**

**MOTION: Table the vote on the funding portion of the IFC proposal until the December 13, 2002 meeting of this committee to allow time for the IFC workgroup to complete the funding portion.**

**MEMBERS APPROVED THE MOTION UNANIMOUSLY.**

Frank Costanzo suggested that the IFC workgroup may want to supply information regarding the IFC proposal to the Attorney General-elect and his transition team.

## **CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Paul Geisheker, from the public, presented his thoughts on open meeting laws.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on December 13, 2002, Judicial Education Center, 541 E. Van Buren, Suite B-4, Phoenix. Final IFC funding refinements will be presented for a vote.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Sen. Hartley adjourned the meeting at 2:12 p.m.