



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

Minutes of Meeting

Connecticut Commission on Children

Tuesday, November 20, 2008
10 a.m. – Noon
Room 1-E, Legislative Office Building, Hartford

Voting members present: James P. Cordier, Dr. M. Alex Geertsma, Senator Jonathan A. Harris, Alison Hilding, Laura Lee Simon, and Leslie Wolfgang.

Voting members absent: George A. Coleman, Representative Andrew M. Fleischmann, Mary K. Fox, Senator Mary Ann Handley, Representative Mike Lawlor, Josh Piteo, and Mary Grace Reed.

Voting members with excused absences: Judith Busch, John Yrchik.

Ex-officio members present: Mary Marcial, for the Department of Correction; Peter O'Meara, for the Department of Developmental Services; Anne Foley, for the Office of Policy and Management.

Ex-officio members absent: Department of Public Health, Department of Education; Department of Children and Families, Department of Social Services, Attorney General, and Chief Court Administrator.

Commission staff present: Elaine Zimmerman, Thomas Brooks, Elizabeth Brown, Patricia Estill, Dawn Homer- Bouthiette, Kevin Flood, Rachel Levy, and Mary Kate Lowndes.

Handouts: Meeting agenda; draft of the September 23, 2008 meeting minutes; "The Social State of Connecticut 2008."

Meeting Convened

Chairman Geertsma convened the meeting at 10 a.m.

Representative Christel Truglia honored

The Commission honored departing state Representative Christel Truglia of Stamford for her many years of tireless work on behalf of Connecticut's children. Rep. John "Jack" Thompson of

Manchester, Senator Jonathan Harris, and Commission Executive Director Elaine Zimmerman congratulated her on her accomplishments and wished her good luck in her future endeavors.

Release of ‘The Social State of Connecticut 2008’

Sarah O. Meadows, Ph.D., associate social scientist at the RAND Corporation and part of the research team from Duke University, gave an overview of “The Social State of Connecticut 2008.” Published annually since 1994, this report provides an overview of the social health of the state, based on 11 indicators of social well-being, or the Social Health Index. It is produced by the General Assembly, the Commission on Children, and the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund.

Overall, Dr. Meadows report, the Index is at its highest level since 1970. Connecticut has significantly reduced its rates of infant mortality, teen pregnancy, and high school dropouts. Juvenile arrests for all crimes are down. But we are faring poorly in unemployment, birth weight, affordable housing, and income variation, she said. The proportion of personal income spent on health care is at its highest rate yet. Hate crimes increased by 28 per cent.

A response-panel discussion followed Dr. Meadows’ presentation. The panel included: Dr. Alex Geertsma, St. Mary’s Hospital; Faith Vos Winkel, of the Office of the Child Advocate; Glen Cassis, executive director of the African American Affairs Commission; Abbey Anderson of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance; Representative Christel Truglia; Senator Jonathan Harris; Sarah Hilding; and Christine O’Grady, parent leader.

Pat Estill recognized

Dr. Geertsma and Ms. Zimmerman honored Commission Special Projects Director Pat Estill for her 15 years of work for Connecticut children.

Adjournment

Dr. Geertsma adjourned the meeting at noon.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. M. Alex Geertsma,
Chair