



JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 5, 2021
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Kim Koppelman, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Kim Koppelman, Mary Adams, Ruth Buffalo, Sebastian Ertelt, Karla Rose Hanson, Mary Johnson, Terry B. Jones, Karen Karls, Lawrence R. Klemin, Jeffery J. Magrum, Bob Paulson, Shannon Roers Jones, Bernie Satrom, Steve Vetter; Senators JoNell A. Bakke, Robert O. Fors, Diane Larson, Janne Myrdal

Member absent: Representative Mary Schneider

Others present: See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

It was moved by Representative Adams, seconded by Senator Fors, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the August 11, 2021, meeting be approved as distributed.

SPOUSAL SUPPORT STUDY

Ms. Sara Behrens, Staff Attorney, North Dakota Supreme Court, provided information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding the history of the Ruff-Fischer Guidelines as they relate to spousal support calculations. She noted:

- Amending existing law to provide definitions for the different types of support would be helpful;
- There is not a bright-line rule as to how many years of marriage equates to a long-term marriage for purposes of calculating support payments; and
- Although district courts analyze the Ruff-Fischer Guidelines, the factors are not always included in spousal support orders.

Mr. James Fleming, Director, Child Support Enforcement Division, Department of Human Services, provided information ([Appendix C](#)) regarding the guidelines used for child support calculations. He noted:

- A key distinction between spousal support and child support is child support calculations are based on a parent's taxable income rather than a parent's wealth;
- Changes to child support also occur through a motion to the court; and
- There are about 40,000 child support cases in the state.

Ms. Carrie Francis and Ms. DeAnn Pladson, North Dakota family law attorneys, provided testimony relating to spousal support. They noted:

- Codifying definitions of "permanent", "rehabilitative", and "nonpermanent" spousal support would be extremely helpful;
- A periodic review of existing spousal support orders likely would create a burden on the system; and
- Creating a definition for what constitutes a "long-term marriage" and codifying the Ruff-Fischer Guidelines would assist practitioners and courts.

JUVENILE JUSTICE STUDY

Ms. Joy Ryan, President and Chief Executive Officer, and Mr. Jim Vetter, Vice President of Treatment Services and Government Relations, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, provided information ([Appendix D](#)) relating to the services offered to youth in the state. They noted:

- The Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is licensed to house 88 children across its three campuses in the state;
- Rural outreach is limited due to a lack of mental health professionals in rural areas; and
- Children and families need long-term ongoing support.

Ms. Katie Berg, Educational Manager, Know the Truth ND, North Dakota Adult & Teen Challenge, provided information ([Appendix E](#)) regarding programming offered to youth. She noted the Know the Truth ND program was developed to educate middle school and high school students about addiction and the consequences of their choices.

Pastor Phil Wolverton, Executive Director, North Dakota Adult & Teen Challenge, noted the national success rate for the Adult & Teen Challenge program is 78 percent and there are 1,500 programs around the world.

Ms. Laura Feldmann, Executive Director, Home on the Range, provided information ([Appendix F](#)) regarding mental health services available for youth. She noted:

- Home on the Range is a 1,400 acre working ranch with 100 head of cattle;
- Services are provided to youth between the ages of 12 and 19 years of age; and
- The program served 106 youth in 2020.

Ms. Pamela Sagness, Director, Behavioral Health Division, Department of Human Services, provided information ([Appendix G](#)) regarding mental health services available to youth in the state. She noted the State Hospital does not provide services to youth, and human service zone personnel are not adequately trained in youth mental health.

REPORT

Mr. Jason Wahl, Director, Division of Medical Marijuana, Department of Health, provided information ([Appendix H](#)) regarding the annual report relating to medical marijuana in the state as required by North Dakota Century Code Section 19-24.1-39. He noted:

- As of June 30, 2021, the state had 6,450 registered qualifying patients designated caregivers, and compassion center agents with active medical marijuana cards;
- In fiscal year 2021, the department revoked 10 registry identification cards; and
- Fees associated with medical marijuana generated \$1,130,959 in fiscal year 2021.

No further business appearing, Chairman Koppelman adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Samantha E. Kramer
Senior Counsel

ATTACH:8