

Domestic Violence Commission Meeting
Minutes – January 8, 2009
Governor’s Crime Commission
1201 Front Street, Raleigh, NC

Commission Attendees: Chairperson Lisa Angel, Sherry Bradsher (representing Secretary Dempsey Benton) Barry Bryant (representing Linda Hayes), David Elliott, Dr. Mike Evers, Beth Froehling, Chief John Guard, Charlotte Jordan-Williams (representing Dr. Mike Evers), Ericka Shearin (representing Senator Doug Berger), Deputy Secretary McKinley Wooten

Teleconference participants: Julia Freeman and Linda Holden-Cox

Department of Administration (DOA) Attendees: Mel Chilton, Tara Minter, Cindy Olsen, Robert Zimmers

Guest Attendees: Debbie Allen (GCC), Misty Arnold (GCC), Jan Harris (DHHS)

A. OPENING/WELCOME – Lisa Angel, Chairperson

Chairperson Angel thanked everyone for being here and announced that some commission members will be participating by teleconference. Chairperson Angel thanked Representative Marian McLawhorn for being here and requested that she speak about the meeting being held this afternoon. Representative McLawhorn announced that a General Assembly subcommittee meeting will be held at 3:00PM on January 8, 2009. The subcommittee’s recommendations will go before the full Joint Legislative Committee on Domestic Violence which will meet on January 14th, at 2:30 pm.

Representative McLawhorn added that she is hopeful that the full committee will agree and take a vote on the domestic violence bills as we start the legislative session. Representative McLawhorn stated that the commission members should keep in mind that a bill based on the Statewide Automated Victim Assistance & Notification (SAVAN) enhancement report is one of several bills, to come out of the committee. There is always an option of going to a specific member of the General Assembly with a bill if there is something that the Commission wants sponsored. Representative McLawhorn pointed out that it’s really important for all of Commission members to attend today’s subcommittee meeting to point out any enhancements or changes to the SAVAN enhancement report.

B. INTRODUCTIONS – Via Teleconference Commissioners

Chairperson Angel acknowledged the Commission members that were participating via teleconference. Linda Holden-Cox and Julia Freeman announced that they were on the line.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairperson Angel asked if everyone had a chance to review the December 11, 2008 minutes from the DV Commission meeting. Dr. Mike Evers stated that on page 5 in the 2nd paragraph, the words “for supervised cases” should be added after “Ms. Charlotte Jordan-Williams responded that”. Dr. Evers made the motion to approve the minutes with the requested change and Sherry Bradsher seconded. The minutes were approved.

D. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION – Study on a Statewide Automated Notification System for Persons with Domestic Violence Protective Orders – Subcommittee Report

Chairperson Angel thanked all of those members of the subcommittee that worked on the report. They included: Debbie Allen, Robert Zimmers, Beth Froehling, Tara Minter, Chief John Guard, Robin Colbert and Greg McCloud. She stated that this report will be helpful for the Joint Legislative Committee. Chairperson Angel asked Robert Zimmers to discuss the main points in the report.

Below are highlights of Mr. Zimmers' presentation & suggested changes to the report:

- General Assembly tasked the Domestic Violence Commission, in consultation with a number of other agencies, to examine the feasibility of adopting an automated statewide notification system for recipients of domestic violence protective orders (dvpo). North Carolina currently has an automated system (SAVAN) in place. SAVAN has been expanded to include pictures of offenders, as well as, automated notification regarding sex offenders and that it could be modified to send automated notification to protective order recipients. Mr. Zimmers stated that currently five other states have a similar system (Missouri, Washington, Delaware, Kentucky & Oklahoma).
- Mr. Zimmers discussed the recommendations outlined in the report. One recommendation requested recurring funds in the amount of \$303,000 for the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) who maintains the SAVAN system. Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) couldn't provide an exact cost. The Commission agreed to revise recommendation 3 requesting additional monetary and personnel support for AOC and DOJ.
- Deputy Secretary Wooten suggested that Recommendation #3 open with the fact that the General Assembly conduct an additional investigation to discover the cost to AOC to provide an interface with its database to the SAVAN system. When the investigation is completed, the General Assembly can appropriate whatever dollar amount comes from the investigation to AOC. Deputy Secretary Wooten suggested the report list recommendations 4, 6, 7 and 8 first and combine recommendations 2 and 3. The Commission asked for the inclusion of the Sheriff's Association and the Department of Correction (DOC) in the implementation of the victim protection order enhancement.
- Chairperson Angel asked staff to solicit comments, suggestions for the report from Commission members who joined the meeting via telephone. Debbie Allen asked Commission members for written comments. The Commission suggested the report include in its recommendation a March 1st deadline to receive cost estimates from AOC and DOJ on the needed interfaces for the victim protection order enhancement.
- Mr. Zimmers noted that recommendation #4 is a suggestion to modify the Crime Victim Rights Act. There is a flyer that states certain agencies could educate victims on what's available to them regarding notification of this protective order. There is certainly a precedent when the General Assembly has gone in (in previous legislation) and required Sheriff's departments to provide a certain level of information to domestic violence victims. So the work group thought it was really important that domestic violence victims understand the types of service notifications that they have available to them and amend the

Crime Victim Rights Act to reflect this. Debbie Allen stated that some agencies will not partner with SAVAN because it cannot allow the agencies to meet its notification needs. She noted that a 2004 GCC report revealed SAVANs' cost savings potential for agencies that use it. One of the concerns was, if we are going to enhance the SAVAN service with the VINE Protective Order, we don't want all of this money going there and then to have an agency say, well, we're not going to use that because it won't help us with satisfying the mandate. So we thought, let's just put it in there that SAVAN is a service that can be used to provide those mandated services. Sherry Bradsher noted that recommendation 4 needs to define "certain agencies." Chairperson Angel stated that we're changing this to list the agencies and we're saying that we're going to provide information to the victims of the notification service; paragraph 4. She then asked if that covered everyone's concerns. The question was asked, what about the "make the service available to them"? Chairperson Angel agreed with including the phrase.

- Chairperson Angel stated the report should include a recommendation that the 50B informational sheet include notification. Debbie Allen suggested this request can be added to Recommendation #4 and Chairperson Angel agreed. Representative McLawhorn stated that when we get it together she will be talking with Hal Pell. She asked that when the revisions are completed to let him know so he can explain it to the committee members if necessary. Chairperson Angel thanked Representative McLawhorn and stated that it was a really good recommendation. Ms. Froehling noted that the work group really looked at the issue of victim confidentiality and the report is victim focused. Chairperson Angel verified with Ms. Froehling that the Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV) had approved the report. Ms. Froehling stated that NCCADV did approve it.
- Representative McLawhorn stated that the report is something that every committee member should read and she knows that they will. She requested the Commission forward the report minus the recommendations to the subcommittee early so that they can get some of the background.
- David Elliott asked how someone would know, when they're trying to decide whether to take out a protective order, how they will know that the process has been simplified. It is his belief that if more people know about it they will utilize it. Chief John Guard stated that law enforcement and advocates will ensure that more people know of the new process. Debbie Allen added that included in the U. S. Dept of Justice grant request is an intensive training and education piece provided by the vendor. Chairperson Lisa Angel stated that victim service agencies are going to be a big help with advertising the new process.
- Tara Minter stated that Mr. Zimmers, Chief Guard and Ms. Allen will present the report to the General Assembly subcommittee so that an array of people from different perspectives can answer any questions that subcommittee members may have. Ms. Bradsher made the motion that the Commission adopt the report with the requested changes. Chief John Guard seconded the motion. The Commission passed the motion.

Chairperson Lisa Angel thanked the committee for all of their hard work. Mr. Zimmers stated that he and Hal Pell planned to meet on January 14th. Mr. Zimmers stated he is waiting to see whether or not the report will be on the agenda. Representative McLawhorn stated that it's not going to be a full meeting. Chairperson Lisa Angel stated that it was suggested that the Commission send the

report over first without the recommendations. Mr. Zimmers stated that he would forward a copy to Hal Pell.

Chairperson Lisa Angel asked if there were any other announcements or concerns. She thanked everyone for attending and stated that it was a very effective meeting.

E. MEETING ADJOURNED

Submitted by Cindy Olsen