



NC Human Trafficking Commission: Legislative Committee Meeting
January 21, 2021
WebEx through the NC Judicial Center

10:00am Welcome & Introductions

Committee Chair, Caitlin Brooks

Committee Chair Caitlin Brooks opened the meeting and conducted a verbal roll call to document attendance. Committee members in attendance at the meeting were Daniel Bowes, Caitlin Brooks, Sarah Byrne, Tarrah Callahan, Danielle Carman, Jennifer Haigwood, Tammy Harris, and Eric Zogry. Also in attendance was Commission Staff, Christine Long.

Approval of Minutes: 11.5.2020

Committee Chair, Caitlin Brooks

No amendments to the minutes were requested and the minutes passed unanimously.

Marriage Age Law Presentation

Laura Puryear, McGuireWoods

Laura Puryear presented on a recent study in North Carolina around underage marriages. McGuireWoods Consulting will proceed with a legislative proposal to restrict such marriages. Please see materials for power point details.

Potential Legislative Items

Committee Members

Committee Chair Brooks reviewed where the committee is with drafting a bill to close a loophole discovered in non-DSS involved custody transfers. Commissioner Carman and Committee Chair Brooks will examine recent feedback gained from other agencies and revise the draft for the committee to review again.

Committee members Sarah Byrne and Daniel Bowes discussed the list introduced in the previous meeting for more discussion. Items discussed were:

1. Amend N.C.G.S. 14-43.13 or create new statute to accomplish statutory goal of criminalizing buyer conduct: Sarah and Daniel consulted with some state assistant district attorneys and the feedback was positive. A simple add of the term “patronizes” to the statute would suffice for current goals and the committee will table seeking to increase the penalty for buyers.
2. Increased access to post-conviction relief by modifying the HT-specific relief statutes to no longer require victim testimony. Sarah reports that a recent case went through without a victim testifying and believes this can be tabled for now as well.
3. Daniel brought up the potential need to examine making testifying easier, for changes to 14.204 for conditional discharges, and to add a recommended assessment going to victims to be paid prior to fees and fines being taken out. The Committee will note these for consideration at another point.

Committee Chair Brooks reminded the committee of the importance of obtaining reoccurring funds for the commission and will create a one-pager to use when requesting such. Other discussion pertained to law enforcement charging victims with solicitation and grants the commission could seek to further their business. These will be re-examined at a later date.

Adjournment

Committee Chair Brooks

Committee Chair Brooks adjourned the meeting at 11:00am. The Human Trafficking Commission staff will send out the next meeting announcement for January 21, 2021.

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