

Senate Public Safety Budget Division

Friday, May 5, 2006

Chair: Sen. Jane Ranum

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Rm. 112 Capitol

Agenda

Informational Hearing on the Right to Public Defender Representation

SF3077: Neuville: Public defender representation right modification

- Dr. Oliver Williams, Executive Director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community and Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota
- Kevin Kajer, Chief Administrator, Minnesota Board of Public Defense
- Judge Terri Stoneburner, Minnesota Court of Appeals, Chair, CHIPS Public Defender Workgroup
- Kris Kolar, Chief Public Defender, 9th Judicial District
- Betsy Schollmeier, Assistant Public Defender
- Judge Wally Senyk, Project Chair, Children's Justice Initiative, 7th Judicial District
- Doug Johnson, Washington County Attorney
- Melinda Hugdahl, Staff Attorney, Legal Services Advocacy Project
- Irene Opsahl, Supervising Attorney, Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance - Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis
- Melissa Froehle, Staff Attorney, Central Minnesota Legal Services
- Gail Chang Bohr, Executive Director, Children's Law Center of Minnesota
- Tammy Swanson, Attorney, Swanson, Drobnick and Tousey, LLP
- Lonna Stevens, Public Policy and Legislative Coordinator, Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

Members present: Ranum, Berglin, Betzold, McGinn, Neuville, Skoglund

Members absent: Cohen, Foley, Limmer, Ortman

Senator Ranum, the Chair of the Public Safety Budget Committee, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

A quorum was present at 10:06 a.m.

Dr. Oliver Williams, the Executive Director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community and Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, testified on the impact of restricting representation to custodial parents on social economic disparities in the court system in opposition to S.F. 3077.

Kathy Pontius, Senate Counsel, testified on the constitutionality of S.F. 3077.

Senator Nueville, testified in support of S.F. 3077 and the SCS3077A-11 amendment, modifying the right to representation by a public defender to custodial parents.

Kevin Kajer, Chief Administrator of the Minnesota Board of Public Defense, testified on the limited resources and subsequent overburdening of public defenders in support of S.F. 3077.

Judge Terri Stoneburner, a judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals and Chair of the CHIPS Public Defender Workgroup, testified on the March 2006 CHIPS Public Defender Workgroup Final Report

Witness responded to questions.

Kris Kolar, the Chief Public Defender for the 9th Judicial District, testified on the codification of the agreement between the bench and counties not to provide representation to non-custodial parents or other parties in CHIPS cases due to lack of adequate resources and funding in support of S.F. 3077.

Witness responded to questions.

Betsy Schollmeier, the Assistant Public Defender for Anoka County, testified on the unmanageable caseloads and daily schedules of public defenders in Anoka County in support of S.F. 3077.

Witnesses responded to questions.

Judge Wally Senyk, a judge for the 7th Judicial District and Project Chair of the Children's Justice Initiative, testified on the importance and need for representation of non-custodial parents and other parties in determining child protection cases in opposition to S.F. 3077.

Witness responded to questions.

Doug Johnson, Washington County Attorney, testified on the national and state funding cuts to counties and the position of the County Attorney's Association in opposition to S.F. 3077

Melinda Hugdahl, a Staff Attorney for the Legal Services Advocacy Project, testified on the implications of the proposed modification for county attorneys and concerns with resultant differential treatment in opposition to S.F. 3077.

Irene Opsahl, the Supervising Attorney at the Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance - Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis, testified on the effect of the legislative modification on children's civil rights in opposition to S.F. 3077.

Witnesses responded to questions.

Melissa Froehle, a Staff Attorney for the Central Minnesota Legal Services, testified on her professional experiences representing non-custodial parents and the importance of their representation in opposition to S.F. 3077.

Witness responded to questions.

Gail Chang Bohr, the Executive Director of the Children's Law Center of Minnesota, testified on the work of the Children's Law Center of Minnesota and the disproportionate representation of minorities and low-income families in child protection cases in opposition to S.F. 3077.

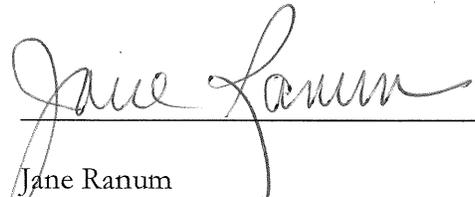
Tammy Swanson, an attorney at Swanson, Drobnick and Tousey, LLP, testified on her professional experience representing non-custodial parents and the challenges they face maneuvering through the court system in opposition to S.F. 3077.

Lonna Stevens, Public Policy and Legislative Coordinator for the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, testified on battered women that lose custodial rights and the implications of restricting guarantees to representation on the rights of battered women in opposition to S.F. 3077.

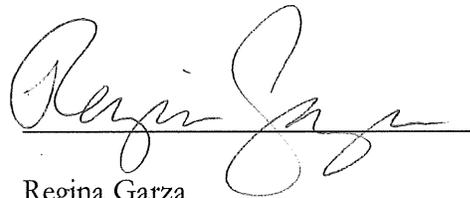
Witnesses responded to questions.

Senator Ranum adjourned the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted:



Jane Ranum
State Senator



Regina Garza
Legislative Assistant

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