

**UNIVERSITY OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**
DAVID A. CLARKE SCHOOL OF LAW

November 16, 2017

Chairman Phil Mendelson
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

Thank you for nominating me for appointment to the District's Child Support Guideline Commission ("Commission"). I am sincerely honored by the nomination. It would be a privilege to serve on the Commission. Below are my responses to the nominee questionnaire. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at tianna.gibbs@udc.edu or (202) 274-5492.

1. Please provide a copy of the Financial Disclosure Statement you filed with the Office of Campaign Finance or the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability. If you have not filed a Financial Disclosure Statement, please provide answers to questions 2-8 in lieu of that statement.

Please see answers to questions 2 to 8 below.

2. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business with the District Government in which you have a beneficial interest valued in excess of \$5,000, including publicly traded stock.

Not applicable.

3. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business (including consulting) with the District Government from which you or your immediate family have received (or are receiving) income for services rendered in excess of \$1,000 during the past two years.

Not applicable.

4. Please provide the name of each business entity transacting business with the District Government in which you or any member of your immediate family serves as an officer, director, partner, or agent. Also list the position(s) held, a brief description of the entity, and any other pertinent details.

Not applicable.

5. Please provide the name of any lender and the amount of liability for each outstanding liability borrowed by you or any member of your immediate family in excess of \$5,000. Do not include loans from a federal or state insured or regulated financial institution, or from any business enterprise regularly engaged in the business of providing revolving credit or installment accounts.

Not applicable.

6. Please list the location of all real property located in the District of Columbia in which you have an interest with a fair market value in excess of \$5,000.

401 Madison Street NE, Washington, DC 20011

7. Please list all professional and occupational licenses held by you.

I hold licenses to practice law in the District of Columbia and State of New York.

8. Please list any professional organizations of which you are currently a member.

I am currently a member of the DC Bar Association and the DC Bar Family Law Community. I am also a member of the Steering Committee of the DC Bar Family Law Community.

9. Please list all boards and commissions connected with the District government on which you are or have been a member, and include the term of service for each.

Not applicable.

10. Please list any other boards (e.g. Boards of Directors of a non-profit) on which you are a member.

Not applicable.

11. Do you have any outstanding liability for taxes, fees, or other payments to the District, federal, or other state or local governments, either contested or uncontested? If so, please provide documentation of attempts to pay the amount owed or to resolve the disputed claim.

To my knowledge, I do not have any outstanding liability for taxes, fees, or other payments to any government entity.

12. Do you or any member of your immediate family have any interest, financial or otherwise, that may directly or indirectly pose a conflict of interest for you in performance of your duties as a member of the Commission?

No.

13. Please describe any local political activity (i.e. the District of Columbia local elections or campaigns) that you have engaged in over the past five years, including any campaign contributions to a local candidate or political action committee.

Not applicable.

14. Are you registered with any local, state, or federal government to lobby? If so, list the jurisdiction(s) in which you are registered.

No.

15. (a) Why have you agreed to serve for a four-year term?

I have agreed to serve on the Child Support Guideline Commission for a four-year term for three reasons.

First, I am passionate about the importance of child support to familial well-being. Child support is critical to help lift families out of poverty and facilitate the involvement of both parents in a child's life, which improves the child's well-being. Studies have shown the importance of child support to the well-being of children and families, as well as the harm to children and families when the child support process does not produce optimal results because orders are too high, or too low, or are not adjusted when circumstances change. See "The Child Support Program is a Good Investment, *The Story Behind the Numbers*, Office of Child Support Enforcement, December 2016. It is imperative that the process for establishing and modifying child support orders is fair and accurate. The Child Support Guideline Commission plays a central role in ensuring that the child support process produces outcomes that benefit children and families.

Second, I am knowledgeable about the child support system and the laws that govern it. After graduating from law school, I received a fellowship to represent custodial and non-custodial parents in child support cases, as well as engage in reform of the child support system

in the District. The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia was the host organization for my fellowship project.

During my fellowship, in addition to representing parents in child support cases at DC Superior Court, I participated in court reform efforts, testified before the DC Council at agency oversight hearings, and convened meetings with the Child Support Services Division of the Office of the Attorney General to address agency practices that negatively impact parents and caregivers living in poverty who receive and pay child support. This work was my primary focus during my first two years at Legal Aid.

I continued to participate in systemic reform efforts and provide representation to parents in child support cases after my fellowship ended. I became a staff attorney and then a supervising attorney at Legal Aid. Over the last nine years, I have developed expertise about the child support system nationally and in the District. The Child Support Guideline is one of the most important components of child support law. It is imperative that the Commission charged with reviewing and revising the Guideline has a wide variety of perspectives. I will bring the perspective of a former legal services attorney who represented people living in poverty, an advocate for children and families, and now an academic.

In my current role as an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law, I am able to spend more time exploring the scholarly literature about child support. I am currently writing an article that examines the voluntary acknowledgment of paternity process in the District and whether it adequately preserves due process. Service is a core component of my current position (in addition to teaching and scholarship). Appointment to the Child Support Guideline Commission will provide a meaningful way for me to use my skills and experience to serve children and families.

Finally, I am excited about the opportunity to serve the District of Columbia. I have lived in the District for over nine years. I fell in love with the city when I participated in a domestic exchange program in DC during college. After that experience, I knew that I wanted to live and work in the District after graduation. I found opportunities to return to DC after I graduated from college, then during summers in law school for internships, and then after law school when I began working at Legal Aid. After college, I had a year-long fellowship with the Fannie Mae Foundation and began to understand the importance of affordable housing and the challenges of matching the supply to the demand. During law school, I was a summer intern at a DC-based civil rights law firm and at the DC office of Covington and Burling. When I moved to DC to work for Legal Aid, I became committed to planting roots in the city and serving the city.

I have lived in DC since I graduated from law school. I was a resident of Ward 1 in the Columbia Heights neighborhood for five years. After I got married, my husband and I bought a house in Ward 4 in Riggs Park. We have lived in that neighborhood for four years. I have attended church in DC the entire time I have lived in the city. My church is very committed to serving District residents, and I have been part of those efforts. I take great pride in the fact that I live, work, and attend church in DC. My children attend daycare in DC, and my family is conscious about shopping in DC. We are truly “in and for the city.”

(b) How do you plan to help the Commission fulfill its role and mission during your time on the Commission over the next four years?

I plan to help the Commission fulfill its role and mission over the next four years by contributing my knowledge, skills, and experience to the work of the Commission. Over the last nine years, I have developed a unique perspective about the District's child support system as a legal services attorney for people living in poverty, an advocate for children and families, and an academic. For every proposed change to the Child Support Guideline, I will be able to consider how the change would impact custodial parents seeking child support, noncustodial parents paying child support, third-party caregivers, and children and families living in poverty. I have worked closely with these populations, and I know their stories. They are my clients, and I am their advocate.

This week, I assisted two litigants with cases in the Paternity and Support Branch of DC Superior Court. One litigant was seeking child support for her son in college because she could not afford to pay his tuition solely with her income. The other litigant was requesting a reduction in his child support obligation because he had become disabled and was no longer able to pay the amount that he was ordered to pay previously. The legal arguments in both cases turned on interpretation of the Child Support Guideline. Both cases prompted me to consider how the Guideline could be amended to better serve these litigants. This is the perspective I will bring to the Commission—that of an advocate who is intimately familiar with real stories of real people who will be impacted in real ways by changes to the District's Child Support Guideline. Because I have represented parents and caregivers with divergent interests in the child support system, I will bring a balanced approach to my assessment of any proposed changes. My experience has afforded me with the rare skill of being able to view child support issues from multiple vantage points.

16. Please discuss any past and present experiences not already mentioned that you believe are relevant to support your appointment as a member of the Commission.

Please see answers to Question 15.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Tianna Gibbs

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Tianna Gibbs
Assistant Professor of Law