

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
COMMITTEE REPORT**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

DRAFT

TO: All Councilmembers

FROM: Chairman Phil Mendelson
Committee of the Whole

DATE: December 5, 2017

SUBJECT: Report on PR 22-559, “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment Resolution of 2017”

The Committee of the Whole, to which PR 22-559, the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment Resolution of 2017,” was referred, reports favorably thereon, and recommends approval by the Council.

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I. BACKGROUND AND NEED

On October 16, 2017, PR 22-559, the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment Resolution of 2017,” was introduced by Chairman Mendelson. The proposed resolution was referred to the Committee of the Whole on November 7, 2017. The purpose of PR 22-559 is to appoint Ms. Gibbs as a member of the Child Support Guideline Commission (“Commission”) for a four-year term. Ms. Gibbs will be succeeding Stacey Brustin as the Council appointee to the Commission. Ms. Brustin’s term expired on December 20, 2016.

Ms. Gibbs is a Ward 4 resident of the District of Columbia. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a minor in Psychology from Stanford University and her Juris Doctorate from Yale Law School. Ms. Gibbs is an Assistant Professor of Law and Co-Director of the General Practice Clinic at the University of the District of Columbia, David A. Clarke School

of Law. Prior to working at the David A. Clarke School of Law, Ms. Gibbs was a supervising attorney within the domestic violence and family law unit at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia. As a supervising attorney, she was responsible for supervising staff and for representing domestic violence survivors in child custody and civil protection order cases, and custodial and non-custodial parents in child support cases. In addition, she was responsible for advocating for reforms to the District's family law and domestic violence systems. Ms. Gibbs is a member of the DC Bar and is a member of the Steering Committee of the DC Bar Family Law Community.

The Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984¹, required every state to enact child support guidelines to determine how child support awards are calculated. The child support guidelines are required to follow the following principles: 1) must be available to the judges who set child support amounts; 2) application of the guideline must be presumptive and rebuttable only where their application would be unjust or inappropriate; 3) deviation from the guidelines must be supported by written findings stating the guideline award amount and the reasons for varying from this amount; 4) must take into account all earnings and income of the parent with a duty to pay support; 5) must be based on specific criteria, and their application must result in a numeric child support value; and 6) must address how the child's medical needs will be covered.² Once the child support guidelines are established, states are required to review their guideline once every four years.³ The Commission was established as the body to conduct the review of the child support guidelines in the District of Columbia to be in compliance with federal law.⁴

The Commission examines the child support guidelines and makes recommendations to the Mayor.⁵ Under District law, any case involving the establishment of child support, or modification of an existing child support order, requires a judicial officer to conduct a hearing and make a finding in accordance with the child support guidelines. The child support guidelines, codified at D.C. Official Code § 16-916.01, provides a presumptive formula for determining the amount of child support in cases where the parents are unmarried, separated, or divorced.⁶

Pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 16-916.02(d), the Commission is required to: 1) review and recommend updates to the guideline not less than once every four years; 2) review pertinent economic data, including poverty levels, and information on the functioning of the guidelines for the purpose of recommending changes to the guidelines; 3) hold a public meeting at least annually to receive oral or written comments from members of the Bar or the public; and 4) to perform other

¹ Public L. No. 98-378, 98 Stat. 1305 (1984).

² Child Support Guideline Commission, Report of the District of Columbia Child Support Guideline Commission: Final Recommendations, 4-5 (December 2013) (on file with the Committee). [hereinafter 2013 Commission Report].

³ *Id.* at 5.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ D.C. Official Code § 16-916.02(a).

⁶ The child support guideline in the District are based on the following principles: 1) both parents share legal responsibility for support of the child; 2) subsistence needs of each parent shall be taken into account; 3) a parent must meet a child's basic needs, as well as to provide additional support; 4) the guideline shall be gender neutral; 5) the guideline shall be applied consistently regardless of whether either parent is a recipient of benefits under a public-assistance program; and 6) the guideline shall be applied presumptively. (D.C. Official Code § 16-916.01(c)).

tasks as necessary to develop, update, or monitor the guidelines and to ensure the District is in compliance with federal mandates.

The Commission consists of nine members, all of whom must be District residents.⁷ The Mayor shall appoint the Chairperson as well as two members, one of whom must be a member of the DC Bar and an expert in the fields of family law and child support.⁸ The Mayor must also appoint one member to represent the Child Support Enforcement Division of the Office of Attorney General.⁹ The Chief of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia may appoint two members.¹⁰ The Council shall designate one Councilmember and appoint two additional members, one of the two members shall be a member of the DC Bar and be an expert in the fields of family law and child support.¹¹

Table 1: Membership of the Child Support Guideline Commission

Resolution #	Position	Appointee	Term Expiring:
<i>PR 22-558</i>	<i>Proposed Council Appointee (Council Designee)</i>	<i>Councilmember Charles Allen</i>	<i>April 9, 2021</i>
<i>PR 22-557</i>	<i>Proposed Council Appointee (D.C. Bar Member and Expert in Family Law and Child Support)</i>	<i>Meridel Bulle-Vu</i>	<i>December 20, 2018</i>
<i>PR 22-559</i>	<i>Proposed Council Appointee</i>	<i>Tianna Gibbs</i>	<i>December 20, 2020*</i>
	Chief Judge of Superior Court Appointee	Judge Kenia Seoane Lopez	September 1, 2021
	Chief Judge of Superior Court Appointee	Judge Shelly A. Mulkey	September 1, 2021
	Mayoral Appointee (D.C. Bar Member and Expert in Family Law and Child Support)	LaShelle Williams-Franklin (Chairperson)	December 31, 2021
	Mayoral Appointee	Tamisa Brooks	December 31, 2021
	Mayoral Appointee (Child Support Enforcement Division, Office of Attorney General)	Justin Latus	December 31, 2021
	Mayoral Appointee	Vacant	

* It should be noted that R 14-652, which appointed Kristin Henrickson to the Commission had a term end date of December 17, 2004. However, R 14-652 became effective on December 20, 2002, accordingly the actual term end date should have been December 20, 2004. Additionally, the resolutions approved subsequent to the approval of R 14-652 used December 17th as the term end date. PR 22-559 will reflect an updated term end date.

The District’s child support guidelines were last revised in 2016, when the Council approved the Child Support Revision Amendment Act of 2016 (“2016 Act”).¹² The 2016 Act adopted recommendations that were outlined in the 2013 Commission Report. The Commission recommended to keep the Income Shares model, which requires each of the parents to provide

⁷ D.C. Official Code § 16-916.02(b).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² D.C. Law 21-107; D.C. Official Code § 16-916.01.

support for the child.¹³ In addition, the Commission refined the child support guidelines and corrected and improved the guidelines to address any discrepancies.¹⁴

It is necessary for the Council to make its appointments to the Commission as soon as possible. Attorney General Racine sent a letter to Chief Judge Morin, Mayor Bowser, and Chairman Mendelson urging them to move expeditiously on their appointments to the Commission. Attorney General Racine wrote the Commission “must hold its first meeting by December 31, 2017 to meet its statutory requirements that it hold a public meeting annually”.¹⁵ Furthermore, the letter indicated the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child Enforcement issued a final rule entitled, “Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs,” which requires the District to update their child support guidelines.¹⁶ The final rule requires the Commission to review the District’s child support guidelines before the end of the year.

During the hearing on her appointment resolution, Ms. Gibbs testified she is well-suited to serve on the Commission since: 1) she is passionate about the importance of child support to familial well-being; 2) she is knowledgeable of the child support system; and 3) she wants to serve the District and give back to the community.¹⁷ Ms. Gibbs added that she believes that the Commission plays a central role in ensuring that the child support process produces an outcome that benefits children and families and she will ensure that it is fair and accurate.¹⁸ She plans to bring to the Commission a perspective of a former legal services attorney who represented low-income individuals and was an advocate for children and families.¹⁹ Ms. Gibbs believes her previous experience working on child support issues allows her to consider how changes in the guidelines would impact custodial parents seeking child support, non-custodial parents paying child support, third-party caregivers, and children and families living in poverty.²⁰

Based on her impressive credentials, the Committee recommends the appointment of Ms. Gibbs to serve on the Commission. She has over nine years of experience working on the child support system both on the national level and in the District.²¹ That experience will help bring an expertise to the Commission. The Committee recommends adoption of PR 22-559.

¹³ *Supra* note 2 at 11.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Letter from Karl Racine, Attorney General for the District of Columbia, to Robert E. Morin, Chief Judge Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Muriel Bower, Mayor of the District of Columbia, and Phil Mendelson, Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia (June 20, 2017) (On filed with the Committee of the Whole).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Tianna Gibbs, Nominee, Testimony before the DC Council Committee of the Whole, Page 1, November 20, 2017.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.* at 2.

²⁰ *Id.* at 3.

²¹ *Id.* at 2.

II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

- October 16, 2017 PR 22-559, the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment Resolution of 2017” is introduced by Chairman Mendelson.
- October 27, 2017 Notice of Intent to Act on PR 22-559 is published in the *District of Columbia Register*.
- November 3, 2017 Notice of a Public Hearing on PR 22-559 is published in the *District of Columbia Register*.
- November 7, 2017 PR 22-559 is “read” at a Committee of the Whole meeting and the referral to the Committee of the Whole is official.
- November 20, 2017 The Committee of the Whole holds a public hearing on PR 22-559.
- December 5, 2017 The Committee of the Whole marks-up PR 22-559.

III. POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

Ms. Gibbs is the Council’s appointee to the Commission. The Executive provided no comment on Ms. Gibbs’ appointment.

IV. COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The Committee received no comments from any Advisory Neighborhood Commission on PR 22-559.

V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a public hearing on PR 22-559 on Monday, November 20, 2017. The testimony summarized below is from that hearing. A copy of the written testimony is provided to the Committee is attached to this report.

Tianna Gibbs, Appointee, testified and answered questions from Chairman Mendelson regarding her background and experience as it pertains to the Commission and her interest in serving on the Commission.

The Committee received no testimony or comments in opposition to Ms. Gibbs’ appointment.

VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Members of the Child Support Guideline Commission are appointed pursuant to section 3 of the Child Support Guideline Amendment Act of 1990, effective July 25, 1990 (D.C. Law 8-150; D.C. Official Code § 16-916.02), which establishes the Commission.

VII. FISCAL IMPACT

PR 22-559 will have no fiscal impact on the District of Columbia budget or financial plan. Pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 16-916.02(f), members of the Child Support Guideline Commission serve without compensation.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| <u>Section 1</u> | States the short title of PR 22-559. |
| <u>Section 2</u> | Confirms the appointment of Tianna Gibbs as a member of the Child Support Guideline Commission to serve a 4-year term to end December 20, 2020. |
| <u>Section 3</u> | Requires that a copy of the resolution, upon adoption, be transmitted to the appointee, the chairperson of the Commission, and to the Mayor. |
| <u>Section 4</u> | Provides that PR 22-559 shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register. |

IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

X. ATTACHMENTS

1. PR 22-559 as introduced.
2. Nominee's response to Committee questions.
3. Witness Testimony.
4. Legal sufficiency determination.
5. Committee Print for PR 22-559.

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20004

Memorandum

To : Members of the Council

From : 
Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council

Date : October 18, 2017

Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Office of the Secretary on Monday, October 16, 2017. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

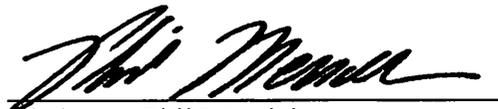
TITLE: "Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment Resolution of 2017", PR22-0559

INTRODUCED BY: Chairman Mendelson

The Chairman is referring this legislation to the Committee of the Whole.

Attachment

cc: General Counsel
Budget Director
Legislative Services


Chairman Phil Mendelson

1
2
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7 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION
8

9
10 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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12

13
14
15 To appoint Ms. Tianna N. Gibbs to the Child Support Guideline Commission.
16

17 RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
18 resolution may be cited as the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment
19 Resolution of 2017”.

20
21 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia appoints:

22 Ms. Tianna N. Gibbs
23 401 Madison Street, N.E.
24 Washington, D.C. 20011
25 (Ward 4)
26

27 as a member of the Child Support Guideline Commission, established by section 3 of the Child
28 Support Guideline Amendment Act of 1990, effective July 25, 1990 (D.C. Law 8-150; D.C.
29 Official Code § 16-916.02), to serve a 4-year term to end December 17, 2020.

30 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution,
31 upon its adoption, to the appointee, the chairperson of the Commission, and to the Office of the
32 Mayor.

33 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in
34 the District of Columbia Register.

TIANNA N. GIBBS

401 Madison Street NE

Washington, DC 20011

(314) 973-5243

tianna.n.gibbs@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Yale Law School, New Haven, Connecticut
Juris Doctor, June 2008

Honors: American Bar Association Legal Opportunity Scholarship; Stephen J. Massey Prize (awarded to the clinic student who most exhibits the values of the Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization)

Stanford University, Stanford, California
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with Distinction, Minor in Psychology, June 2004

Honors: Phi Beta Kappa; Dean's Award for Academic Excellence (every quarter); Condoleezza Rice Award for Academic Excellence; Gates Millennium Scholarship

BAR ADMISSIONS

State of New York, January 2009-Present
District of Columbia, December 2009-Present

EMPLOYMENT AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

University of the District of Columbia, David A. Clarke School of Law, *Assistant Professor of Law and Co-Director of the General Practice Clinic*, Washington, DC
July 2017 to present

Direct the operations of the General Practice Clinic. Teach a biweekly seminar to law students about the mechanics of civil law practice. Supervise law students in civil litigation and transactional law cases. Serve on faculty committees. Engage in legal scholarship.

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia

Supervising Attorney, Domestic Violence/Family Law Unit September 2013-June 2017
Supervised staff attorneys, loaned associates, legal assistants, and law student interns. Supervised intake interviews across practice areas, including volunteer attorneys. Drafted grant applications and managed grants. Represented domestic violence survivors in child custody and civil protection order cases, and custodial and noncustodial parents in child support cases. Mentored pro bono attorneys in family law cases. Advocated for systemic reform of the District's family law (particularly child support) and domestic violence systems.

Staff Attorney, Domestic Violence/Family Law Unit September 2010-August 2013
Represented domestic violence survivors in child custody and civil protection order cases, and custodial and noncustodial parents in child support cases. Conducted intake interviews across practice areas. Filed reply brief for child support case before the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Supervised law student interns and a law graduate fellow. Mentored pro bono attorneys in family law cases. Advocated for systemic reform of the District's child support system.

Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellow, Domestic Violence/Family Law Unit September 2008-August 2010
Represented custodial and noncustodial parents in child support cases. Conducted intake interviews across practice areas. Advocated for systemic reform of the District's child support system.

Domestic Violence Clinic, Student Supervisor, Yale Law School Spring 2008
Represented survivors of domestic violence in divorce, custody, child support, and immigration cases. Supervised two law students.

Community Lawyering Clinic, Law Student Intern, Yale Law School Fall 2007
Represented survivors of domestic violence in divorce, custody, and child support cases.

TIANNA N. GIBBS

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tianna.n.gibbs@gmail.com

Landlord Tenant Clinic, Law Student Intern, Yale Law School
Represented low-income tenants in eviction cases.

Fall 2006, Spring 2007,
Fall 2007, Spring 2008

Relman & Dane, PLLC, Summer Associate, Washington, DC

Summer 2007

Conducted legal research and drafted memoranda, an amicus brief, and a motion in limine for fair housing, employment discrimination, and public accommodations cases.

Covington & Burling, LLP, Summer Associate, Washington, DC

Summer 2007

Researched legal issues such as the conditions under which the statute of limitations for a wrongful death claim would be equitably tolled, and the extent to which Medicaid regulations allow reimbursement for the educational costs of residential facilities for developmentally disabled children. Drafted the articles of incorporation and bylaws for a housing cooperative.

Fair Housing Justice Center, Legal Intern, New York, NY

Summer 2006

Researched the use of mixed-income housing development as a remedy in public housing desegregation and site selection cases. Investigated a fair housing case involving racial discrimination in a federal housing program.

American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, Law Clerk, Fair Housing Project, Baltimore, MD

Summer 2006

Drafted and analyzed client surveys and conducted phone interviews and home visits to assess the efficacy of a housing mobility program created pursuant to the partial consent decree in a public housing desegregation case. Conducted legal research and wrote a memorandum regarding whether non-renewal of the leases of Section 8 voucher holders violates the federal Fair Housing Act.

Community and Economic Development Clinic, Law Student Intern, Yale Law School

Spring 2006

Drafted municipal legislation for a community group that operates farmers' markets in the New Haven area. Conducted legal research on tax-related issues and accessibility requirements for a local Montessori school, and assisted the organization with grant applications.

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND COMMITTEES

- District of Columbia Bar Association, Family Law Section Steering Committee, July 2016-Present (elected for a 3-year term)
- District of Columbia Superior Court Paternity and Support Rules Drafting Committee, 2010-2015
- District of Columbia Superior Court Paternity and Support Subcommittee of the Family Court Implementation Committee, 2010-2014

PUBLICATIONS

- *Developments in Family Law in the District of Columbia: Three Significant Legislative Changes for Child Support*, 18 UDC/DCSL L. Rev. 201 (2015) (with Meridel Bulle-Vu and Ashley McDowell)
- *District of Columbia Practice Manual, 2014 Edition*, "Parentage" and "Child Support" (with Stacy Brustin et al.)
- *District of Columbia Practice Manual, 2011 Edition*, "Parentage" and "Child Support" (with Vanessa Batters-Thompson et al.)
- Brief of Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia et al. as *Amici Curiae* in Support of Petitioner, *Turner v. Rogers*, 564 U.S. 431 (2011), (No. 10-10)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS (representative sample)

- Panelist and speaker for career development seminars at George Washington University Law School (2014), University of Virginia School of Law (2014), and Howard University School of Law (2013 and 2014)
- Panelist, *Legal Services and Social Change: 50 Years of New Haven Legal Assistance*, Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowship Colloquium, Yale Law School, 2014
- Panelist, *Paternity Establishment*, DC Bar Family Law Section evening program, 2012

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?

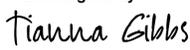
I plan to help the Commission fulfill its role and mission over the next four years by contributing my knowledge, skills, and experience to the work of the Commission. Over the last nine years, I have developed a unique perspective about the District's child support system as a legal services attorney 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:

D262F20024F049A...

Tianna Gibbs
Assistant Professor of Law

**Testimony of Tianna Gibbs for Public Hearing Regarding
Appointment to the Child Support Guideline Commission**

My name is Tianna Gibbs. I am an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law.

I would like to thank Councilmember Allen and Chairman Mendelson for nominating me for appointment to the District's Child Support Guideline Commission. I am sincerely honored by the nomination. It would be a privilege to serve on the Commission.

I would be well-suited to serve on the Child Support Guideline Commission for three reasons: 1) I am passionate about the importance of child support to familial well-being; 2) I am knowledgeable about the child support system and the laws that govern it; and 3) I am excited about the opportunity to serve the District of Columbia. I will expound briefly on each reason.

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. 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. 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 this legislative body 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. I helped start the Child Support Resource Center, where Legal Aid and Bread for the City attorneys provide same-day representation to child support litigants five days each week.

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 UDC Law School, 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 protects 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.

I plan to help the Child Support Guideline Commission fulfill its 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. 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.

Just last 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.

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. When I moved to DC after law school, 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.” My service on the Child Support Guideline Commission will afford me with another opportunity to use my skills and experience to serve the District of Columbia. I am excited about the work ahead.

I am happy to answer any questions you have about my background and interest in serving on the Child Support Guideline Commission.

7 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

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9 PR 22-559
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12 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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17 To appoint Ms. Tianna Gibbs to the Child Support Guideline Commission.
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19 RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
20 resolution may be cited as the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment
21 Resolution of 2017”.

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23 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia appoints:

24 Ms. Tianna Gibbs
25 401 Madison Street, N.E.
26 Washington, D.C. 20011
27 (Ward 4)
28

29 as a member of the Child Support Guideline Commission, established by section 3 of the Child
30 Support Guideline Amendment Act of 1990, effective July 25, 1990 (D.C. Law 8-150; D.C.
31 Official Code § 16-916.02), to serve a 4-year term to end December 20, 2020.

32 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution,
33 upon its adoption, to the appointee, the chairperson of the Commission, and to the Office of the
34 Mayor.

35 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in
36 the District of Columbia Register.