

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

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

TO: All Councilmembers

FROM: Chairman Phil Mendelson
Committee of the Whole

DATE: May 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Report on PR 24-178, “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment Resolution of 2021”

The Committee of the Whole, to which PR 24-178, the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Appointment Resolution of 2021,” was referred, reports favorably thereon, and recommends approval by the Council.

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I. BACKGROUND AND NEED

On April 5, 2021, PR 24-178, the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Reappointment Resolution of 2021,” was introduced by Chairman Mendelson. The proposed resolution was referred to the Committee of the Whole on April 6, 2021. The purpose of PR 24-178 is to reappoint Ms. Gibbs as a member of the Child Support Guideline Commission (“Commission”) for a four-year term ending December 17, 2024.

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 federal Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984¹, requires 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 guidelines 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) child support must take into account all earnings and income of the parent with a duty to pay support; 5) the guidelines must be based on specific criteria, and their application must result in a numeric child support value; and 6) the guidelines must address how the child's medical needs will be covered.² Once the child support guidelines are established, the states are required to review their guidelines once every four years.³ The Child Support Guideline Commission was established as the body to review the child support guidelines in the District of Columbia to bring them into compliance with federal law.⁴

Quadrennially, 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, provide 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 guidelines 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

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)).

to receive oral or written comments from members of the Bar or the public; and 4) perform other tasks as necessary to develop, update, or monitor the guidelines and to ensure that the District is in compliance with federal mandates.

The Commission consists of nine members, all of whom must be District residents.⁷ The Mayor appoints 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 Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia may appoint two members.¹⁰ The Council designates 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:
PR 24-178	<i>Proposed Council Appointee</i>	<i>Tianna Gibbs</i>	<i>December 17, 2024</i>
R 22-669	Council Appointee (D.C. Bar Member and Expert in Family Law and Child Support)	Meridel Bulle-Vu	December 20, 2022
R 22-314	Council Appointee (Council Designee)	Councilmember Charles Allen	October 31, 2021
	Chief Judge of Superior Court Appointee	Hon. Judge Kenia Seoane López	September 1, 2021
	Chief Judge of Superior Court Appointee	Hon. Judge Shelly A. Mulkey	September 1, 2021
	Mayoral Appointee (D.C. Bar Member and Expert in Family Law and Child Support)	Vacant (Chairperson)	December 31, 2021
	Mayoral Appointee (Community Member)	Tamisa Brooks	December 31, 2021
	Mayoral Appointee (Child Support Enforcement Division, Office of Attorney General)	Evann O'Donnell	Pending Appointment
	Mayoral Appointee	Vacant	

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 keeping 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 discrepancies.¹⁴

During the hearing on her appointment resolution, Ms. Gibbs testified she would like to serve another term for three reasons. First, Ms. Gibbs is passionate about the role that child support plays in cultivating familial well-being.¹⁵ Second, she is knowledgeable about the child support system and the laws that govern it.¹⁶ Ms. Gibbs spent years working as an attorney on child support issues and practices with the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia. Now she studies the topic academically in her role as an Associate Professor of Law at the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law.¹⁷ Finally, Ms. Gibbs has a passion for service who takes pride in the fact that she lives and works in the District.¹⁸

Based on her impressive credentials and expertise, the Committee recommends the reappointment of Ms. Gibbs to the Commission. She has over a decade of experience working in the child support system both on the national level and in the District. That experience will continue to be of great value to the Commission. The Committee recommends adoption of PR 24-178.

II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

April 5, 2021	PR 24-178, the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Reappointment Resolution of 2021” is introduced by Chairman Mendelson.
April 6, 2021	PR 24-178 is “read” at a Committee of the Whole meeting and the referral to the Committee of the Whole is official.
April 9, 2021	Notice of Intent to Act on PR 24-178 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> .
April 16, 2021	Notice of a Public Hearing on PR 24-178 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> .
April 26, 2021	The Committee of the Whole holds a public hearing on PR 24-178.
May 4, 2021	The Committee of the Whole marks-up PR 24-178.

¹³ *Supra* note 2 at 11.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Testimony of Tianna Gibbs, Associate Professor, University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law, Before the Committee of the Whole, April 26, 2021.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

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 24-178.

V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a public hearing on PR 24-178 on April 26, 2021. The testimony summarized below is from that hearing. A copy of the written testimony 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 being reappointed to 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.¹⁹

VII. FISCAL IMPACT

PR 24-178 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.

¹⁹ Section 3 (D.C. Official Code § 16-916.02) was amended by D.C. Law 14-190 (October 1, 2002) to change the membership, including reducing the size of the Commission.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

- Section 1 States the short title of PR 24-178.
- Section 2 Confirms the appointment of Tianna Gibbs as a member of the Child Support Guideline Commission to serve a 4-year term to end December 17, 2024.
- Section 3 Requires that a copy of the resolution, upon adoption, be transmitted to the appointee, the chairperson of the Commission, and to the Mayor.
- Section 4 Provides that PR 24-178 shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.

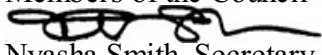
IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

X. ATTACHMENTS

1. PR 24-178 as introduced.
2. Nominee's response to Committee questions.
3. Witness Testimony.
4. Legal sufficiency determination.
5. Committee Print for PR 24-178.

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 : Monday, April 5, 2021
Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Office of the Secretary on Monday, April 05, 2021. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Reappointment Resolution of 2021", PR24-0178

INTRODUCED BY: Chairman Mendelson

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

Attachment
cc: General Counsel
Budget Director
Legislative Services

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A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To reappoint Ms. Tianna N. Gibbs to the Child Support Guideline Commission.

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Child Support Guideline Commission Tianna Gibbs Reappointment Resolution of 2021”.

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia reappoints:

Ms. Tianna N. Gibbs
Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
(Ward 3)

as a member of the Child Support Guideline Commission, established by 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), to serve a 4-year term to end December 17, 2024.

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

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

TIANNA N. GIBBS



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

ACADEMIC 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 September 2020

Associate Professor of Law and Co-Director of the General Practice Clinic, Washington, DC, October 2020 to present

Teach civil procedure to first-year law students. 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. Produce and engage with legal scholarship.

OTHER LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia

Supervising Attorney, Domestic Violence/Family Law, 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.

TIANNA N. GIBBS



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. Drafted 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.

Landlord Tenant Clinic, Law Student Intern, Yale Law School, Fall 2006, Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008

Represented low-income tenants in eviction cases.

Relman & Dane, PLLC (now Relman Colfax, 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.

TIANNA N. GIBBS



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.

BAR ADMISSIONS

State of New York, January 2009-Present

District of Columbia, December 2009-Present

PUBLICATIONS

- *In Children's Best Interests* (work-in-progress)
- *Domestic Violence, Meaning and Belonging* (work-in-progress)
- *Paper Courts and Parental Rights: Balancing Access, Agency, and Due Process*, 54 Harv. C.R.-C.L. L. Rev. 549 (2019)
- *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)

TIANNA N. GIBBS



PRESENTATIONS (representative sample)

- Presenter, *Rights Dilution*, Clinical Law Review Workshop, 2020
- Presenter, *Rights Dilution*, Family Law Scholars and Teachers Conference, 2020
- Presenter, *Rights Dilution*, Mid-Atlantic Clinicians Workshop, 2020
- Panelist, “Addressing Procedural Deficits in the Adjudication of Child Protection Claims in Immigration Court and Before USCIS,” *In Children’s Best Interests: Advancing a Fundamental Standard for the Treatment of Immigrant Children*, Symposium, American University Washington College of Law, 2020
- Panelist, *Best Practices in Pro Bono: Challenging Cases, Clients & Counsel*, Washington Council of Lawyers, 2019
- Presenter, *Paper Courts and Parental Rights, Balancing Access, Agency, and Due Process*, Chapman School of Law Junior Faculty Works-in-Progress Conference, 2018
- Presenter, *Paper Courts and Parental Rights, Balancing Access, Agency, and Due Process*, Family Law Scholars and Teachers Conference, 2018
- Presenter, *Paper Courts and Parental Rights, Balancing Access, Agency, and Due Process*, Mid-Atlantic Clinicians’ Writers Workshop , 2018
- Moderator, UDC Law School Fair Housing Act Symposium, *Building on #MeToo: Disarming Efforts to Wield Power and Control over Female Tenants*, 2018
- Presenter, *Family Law Primer*, DC Superior Court Attorney Negotiator Training, 2017
- 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

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND COMMITTEES

- Judicial Conference of the District of Columbia Circuit Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services, July 2018-Present (appointed by Judicial Conference of the District of Columbia Circuit for a 3-year term)
- District of Columbia Child Support Guideline Commission, August 2018-Present (appointed by Council of the District of Columbia for a 3-year term)
- District of Columbia Bar Association, Family Law Section Steering Committee, July 2016-June 2019 (elected for a 3-year term)

TIANNA N. GIBBS



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- 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

April 23, 2021

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 reappointment 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 for another term. 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 no. 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 \$1,000, 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 \$200 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 \$1,000. 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 \$1,000.

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 the 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.

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.

DC Child Support Guideline Commission, December 2017 to December 2020

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 another term and how do you plan to continue to help the Board fulfill its role and mission during your time on the Commission?

I have agreed to serve on the Child Support Guideline Commission for another 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. 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 thirteen 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 Associate 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 wrote 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 thirteen 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 eight 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 a DC public charter school. We are truly “in and for the city.”

I plan to help the Commission fulfill its role and mission during my time of service by contributing my knowledge, skills, and experience to the work of the Commission. Over the last thirteen 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.

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. Given that you have previously served on the Commission, what challenges do you believe the Board has experienced during your time on the Board, and how do you believe these challenges should be addressed moving forward?

The greatest challenge that the Child Support Guideline Commission has had is scheduling regular meetings. The members of the Commission have busy professional and personal schedules. For example, two members are DC Superior Court judges who preside over cases during much of the traditional workday. Other members, including me, have small children, which limits our ability to meet outside of normal business hours. The pandemic exacerbated this challenge because some members are balancing working from home as well as schooling and caring from children from home.

Another challenge that the Guideline Commission has currently is a lack of leadership. The Chair stepped down in May 2020. Without a leader, it has been difficult to convene the Commission.

These challenges should be addressed by appointing a Chair to the Guideline Commission as soon as possible. The scheduling challenges persist, but are improving. The Commission began meeting again this month. The members have already had two meetings and have additional meetings planned. With a Chair, the Commission will be more likely to sustain this momentum.

Sincerely,

Tianna Gibbs
Associate Professor of Law

Testimony of Tianna Gibbs
Associate Professor, University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law
Before the Committee of the Whole

Public Roundtable
PR 24-178, Child Support Guideline Commission
Tianna Gibbs Reappointment Resolution of 2021

August 26, 2021

I would like to thank the Council for nominating me for reappointment to the District's Child Support Guideline Commission. It would be an honor and a privilege to serve on the Commission for another term.

I was appointed to the Child Support Guideline Commission in December 2017, and I served on the Commission until December 2020. I have accepted the nomination to serve another term on the Child Support Guideline Commission 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. It is imperative that the process for establishing and modifying child support orders is fair and accurate, particularly in light of the current economic downturn due to the COVID-19 global health pandemic. 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 thirteen 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 Associate 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 wrote 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 thirteen years. I fell in love with the city when I participated in a domestic exchange program in District 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 the District 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 eight 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 a DC public charter school. We are truly “in and for the city.”

I plan to help the Commission fulfill its role and mission during my time of service by contributing my knowledge, skills, and experience to the work of the Commission. Over the last thirteen 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.

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. I welcome the opportunity to serve the District of Columbia as a member of the Child Support Guideline Commission.

1 **COMMITTEE PRINT**
2 Committee of the Whole
3 May 4, 2021
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7 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

8
9 24-178

10
11 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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13 _____

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15 To reappoint 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
19 Reappointment Resolution of 2021”.

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21 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia reappoints:

22 Ms. Tianna N. Gibbs
23 Connecticut Avenue, NW
24 Washington, D.C. 20008
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, 2024.

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.