

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

East Region Meeting Minutes

January 30, 2025

11:00 a.m. EST

Via Zoom



Preliminary Business

Call to Order

Regional Representative T. Casanova (VT) called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. EST.

Roll Call

Director Underwood called the roll and a quorum was established.

Voting Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. Trissie Casanova (VT), Designee, Regional Representative
2. Tasha Hunt (CT), Commissioner
3. Francis "Mike" Casey (DE), Commissioner
4. Becki Moore (MA), Commissioner
5. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), Commissioner
6. James Maloney (NY), Designee
7. Wendy Lautsbaugh (PA), Commissioner
8. Eavey Monique-James (VI), Commissioner

Compact Staff in Attendance:

1. Cecily Rexach (CT)
2. Donna Reed (MA)
3. Shyra Bland (NJ)
4. Raymond Tashjian (NY)

Voting Commissioners/Designees Not in Attendance:

1. A. Roy Curtis (ME), Commissioner, Alternate Regional Representative
2. Christine Norris (DE), Designee
3. Jennifer LeBaron (NJ), Commissioner
4. Edwin Lee, Jr. (NJ), Designee
5. Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden (NY), Commissioner
6. Jessica Nash (RI), Commissioner
7. William Dolan (RI), Designee

National Office Staff in Attendance:

1. MaryLee Underwood, Executive Director
2. Joe Johnson, System Project Manager
3. Amanee Cabbagestalk, Training and Administrative Specialist
4. Jenny Adkins, Operations and Policies Specialist
5. Kirsten Wade, Logistics and Administrative Specialist

Agenda

C. Bickford (NH) made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. W. Lautsbaugh (PA) seconded the motion. Representative T. Casanova (VT) approved the agenda by unanimous consent without objection.

Minutes

E. Monique-James (VI) made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on December 10, 2024. M. Casey (DE) seconded the motion. Representative T. Casanova (VT) approved the minutes by unanimous consent without objection.

Check-In

- Representative T. Casanova (VT) asked members to share how the weather is in their states.
 - C. Bickford (NH) shared that New Hampshire has a new governor and the new administration asked her to provide justification as to why New Hampshire should be a part of the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) and Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) given the dues that New Hampshire has to pay.
 - W. Lautsbaugh (PA) shared that she recently trained judges in Pennsylvania and emphasized the protections available under the juvenile compact for the children and youth that ICJ serves.
 - Director Underwood shared that she finds it helpful to explain the ICJ is a legal agreement between states. When a state does not fulfill their responsibilities, it damages the partnership between states.

Unfinished Business

Update on Rules Committee response Rule Proposal for Rule 1-101: Definition of Human Trafficking

- Representative T. Casanova (VT) shared that the Rules Committee voted to not support the East Region's proposed rule amendment to add a definition of "human trafficking" to Rule 1-101 because the term "human trafficking" is used not used in the Compact and or the ICJ Rules. Legal documents do not include definitions for terms that are not used within the document.
- Representative T. Casanova (VT) shared that she feels strongly about the proposal and would still like to move forward without support from the Rules Committee. No discussion ensued.

Discuss how states handle cases when no legal guardian resides in the receiving state

- Representative T. Casanova (VT) opened the floor for discussion of how states are handling cases where there is no legal guardian in the receiving state.
- W. Lautsbaugh (PA) stated that other states have denied transfer of supervision (TOS) cases because no guardian lived in the receiving state.
- C. Bickford (NH) said New Hampshire TOS requests have also been denied for this reason, even though the ICJ rules do not require that a legal guardian lives in the receiving state. The denial was reportedly based on concerns about no one having legal authority to register the youth for school or medical care. She asked what practices and procedures should be in place for a person to have the necessary legal authority if they are not a legal guardian.
- E. Monique-James (VI) said states accept notarized letters declaring someone has legal authority to act on behalf of a youth.
- Representative T. Casanova (VT) responded some agencies might accept a notarized letter, but other agencies and providers might not, like Medicaid. She noted that home evaluations focus on the suitability of the home for the youth, rather than guardianship and custody. The concern is that the youth will not be successful in a home without access school and medical insurance.
- E. Monique-James (VI) asked whether states should research what is accepted by providers in their states.
- Director Underwood suggested it might be effective for a legal guardian to authorize a "power of attorney" and added that many states provide downloadable forms. She explained that "power of attorney" authorizes someone to act on another person's behalf without changing the

individual's rights to act on their own behalf. A parent/guardian can give another person "power of attorney" to sign on their behalf without changing custody or guardianship.

- Director Underwood shared that when adults are sentenced to incarceration in Kentucky, a power of attorney forms are provided as part of the entry process to help ensure others have authority to care for their children.
- B. Moore (MA) shared that Massachusetts accepts transfer cases on the basis that they support decisions made by the sending states, regardless of whether a guardian lives there. She asked whether legal guardians must be physically present for enrollment in school.
- S. Bland (NJ) shared that modern technology reduces the need for legal guardians to be physically present. She suggested ICJ staff should be aware of how school registration systems work in their state.
- C. Bickford (NH) agreed with S. Bland (NJ) and added that a legal guardian who is available in the sending state can collaborate with the relevant parties in the receiving state.
- C. Bickford (NH) also said that Compact offices deny transfer of supervision requests because no legal guardian lives in the receiving state, which is not a reason for denial.
- B. Moore (MA) asked whether a transfer of supervision denial can be appealed.
- Director Underwood responded there is no specific process to appeal a TOS denial. She added that it is essential for receiving state ICJ offices to review home evaluation reports submitted by field officers and determine whether their recommendations are appropriate, based on the ICJ rules.
- Director Underwood suggested that denials could be considered disputes between states. Such disputes can often be resolved through direct communication between state ICJ commissioners, which is the first step in the dispute resolution process. If commissioners cannot resolve a dispute through direct communications, a commissioner can request a rule interpretation or assistance with dispute resolution.
- W. Lautsbaugh (PA) indicated the receiving states did not conduct home evaluations in the denied cases. Instead, they denied the TOS request immediately because there is no legal guardian in that state.
- M. Casey (DE) suggested states should work to overcome barriers and provide the recommended supervision whenever possible.
- Representative T. Casanova (VT) shared that in Vermont only legal guardians can enroll minors in schools. She asked whether a person must be a legal guardian to enroll a child into Medicaid.
- M. Casey (DE) responded that in Delaware a family member that does not have legal guardianship can apply for Medicaid on behalf of the child.
- Director Underwood said that states have different requirements for enrolling into Medicaid.
- Representative T. Casanova (VT) suggested this was a training issue that should be referred to the Training Committee.
- C. Bickford (NH) agreed with Representative Casanova (VT) and recommended referring the topic to the Training Committee for further discussion.
- Director Underwood shared that it would be important for members to think about what they want the training committee to specifically do. She asked is there something specific the East Region wants the Training Committee to look at.
- Representative T. Casanova (VT) stated they would want the Training Committee to specifically look at the rules surrounding the authority to accept or deny supervision.

- M. Casey (DE) noted many legal guardians are not actually involved in youths' lives, even if they live in the same state. He asked whether the focus should be on ensuring there is a legal guardian in the receiving state who is actively involved with the youth.
- Representative T. Casanova (VT) suggested surveying the other regions to see if having TOS requests denied because there is no legal guardian living in the receiving state is a trend.
- Director Underwood recommended discussing the issue to the Executive Committee. If it appears to be a trend, other regional representatives could bring it up in their regional meetings.
- T. Hunt (CT) said it would be helpful to develop a better understanding of the reason for the denials. She asked whether a sending state should make that determination at some point about suitability if there is no guardian living in the receiving state. She said there may be barriers at the state level that have nothing to do with the decision made by the ICJ Office.
- R. Tashjian (NY) suggested states should accept the transfer of supervision cases, then assist with obtaining guardianship.
- T. Hunt (CT) emphasized the importance of acknowledging resource issues within states. She also asked if there is a way to review data about denied home evaluations where the legal guardian does not live in the receiving state to determine the reason for the denial.
- Director Underwood stated that the National Office could pull the data, but it would have to be a case-by-case review so it could be a resource issue. She stated the National Office can look into it before the next Executive Committee meeting.
- T. Casanova (VT) said she will discuss the topic with the Executive Committee.
- Director Underwood encouraged commissioners who experience this issue to contact her to discuss options.

New Business

Discuss barriers to accessing child abuse registry information

- Representative T. Casanova (VT) indicated this this topic would be included in the agenda for the next meeting, due to time limitations.

Hot Topics from "ICJ Updates"

- Rule Commenting Period
 - Representative T. Casanova advised that the Rule Commenting Period would be February 24 – March 26, 2025.
- Human Trafficking Prevention Month
 - Updated Human Trafficking Matrix
 - Representative T. Casanova asked members to review the information in the human trafficking matrix on the Commission's website and make any necessary updates.
 - *Representative T. Casanova (VT) shared there is a UNITY Spotlight article on using the "human trafficking data field" in UNITY*
 - Representative T. Casanova (VT) reminded members that UNITY has a human trafficking field and asked members to indicate information about human trafficking when they enter cases into the UNITY data system.

Next Steps

- Representative T. Casanova (VT) shared a reminder that state council reports are due on January 31, 2025.
- Representative T. Casanova (VT) reported she asked the National Office to schedule 90 minutes for future meetings to allow more time for discussions.
- T. Hunt (CT) shared that Cecily Rexach (CT) would retire on January 31, 2025.

Adjourn

Representative T. Casanova (VT) adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 12:02 p.m. EST.