

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

East Region Meeting Minutes

September 24, 2024

3:34 p.m. CT

Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza

Mobile, Alabama



Preliminary Business

Call to Order

Regional Representative C. Bickford (NH) called the meeting to order at 3:48 p.m. CT.

Roll Call

J. Adkins called the roll, and a quorum was established.

Voting Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), Commissioner, Regional Representative
2. Trissie Casanova (VT), Designee, Alternate Regional Representative
3. Tasha Hunt (CT), Commissioner
4. Francis "Mike" Casey (DE), Commissioner
5. A. Roy Curtis (ME), Commissioner
6. Becki Moore (MA), Commissioner
7. Edwin Lee, Jr. (NJ), Designee
8. James Maloney (NY), Designee
9. William Dolan (RI), Designee
10. Eavey Monique-James (VI), Commissioner

Compact Staff in Attendance:

1. Erin Breitigan (DE)
2. Shyra Bland (NJ)
3. Shaina Kern (NY)
11. Vaughn Walwyn (VI)

Voting Commissioners/Designees Not in Attendance:

1. Christine Norris (DE), Designee
2. Jennifer LeBaron (NJ), Commissioner
3. Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden (NY), Commissioner
4. Wendy Lautsbaugh (PA), Commissioner
5. Natalie Mwaniki (PA), Designee
6. Jessica Nash (RI), Commissioner

Compact Staff Not in Attendance:

12. Bob Lemieux (MA)
13. Kara Buxton (NH), Compact Administrator
14. Erin Laskowski (NH)
15. Raymond Tashjian (NY)
16. Pam Weinman (NY)
17. Amanda Behe (PA)

18. Nordia Napier (CT)
19. Cecily Rexach (CT)
20. Donna Reed (MA)

National Office Staff in Attendance:

1. Jenny Adkins, Operations and Policies Specialist

Agenda

T. Hunt (CT) made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. E. Lee, Jr. (NJ) seconded the motion. Representative C. Bickford (NH) approved the agenda by unanimous consent without objection.

Minutes

T. Hunt (CT) made a motion to approve the June 13, 2024, meeting minutes. R. Curtis (ME) seconded the motion. Representative approved the minutes by unanimous consent without objection.

Check-ins

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) asked region members to share their plans for attendance at the General Session on Wednesday. All region members indicated that they will be present at the General Session.

Reports

- Hot Topics from “*ICJ Updates*” (Region Representative)
 - Representative C. Bickford (NH) shared the following updates:
 - The Wednesday Workshop Live Training Session on Best Practices for the “Final Travel Plan” in UNITY occurred on August 28, 2024.
 - The *2024 Annual Report* is available. States may take up to 10 reports with them and may request more from the National Office.
 - The ICJ committee interest form for 2024-2025 is available now.
 - A Work Group on Non-Delinquent Youths is being formed and will be an option to select on the committee sign-up form, which will also be emailed to states.
 - ABM travel reimbursement information is available on the meeting app and will be sent via email as well.
- Committee Reports
 - Representative C. Bickford (NH) shared updates from the Executive Committee, which met on Monday, September 23 and Tuesday, September 24:
 - Guam is interested in passing the Interstate Compact for Juveniles and joining the Commission.
 - The Best Practice on Return of Runaways with Dependents was released recently and is available on the Commission’s website.
 - J. Maloney (NY) said that NY DCFS has returned a juvenile and their dependent together.
 - Advisory Opinion 01-2024 was recently published regarding juveniles who have pending charges in two or more states.
 - The Executive Committee plans to communicate with National Association of Attorneys General for collaborations.
 - Compact Administrators were invited to the ABM this year to increase understanding and engagement. She encouraged region members to update the national office if any changes to compact administrator positions occur.

- There will be a review of AAICPC-ICJ Memorandum of Understanding.
- State Reports
 - T. Casanova (VT) reported that a short-term, four-bed secure facility will open soon in Vermont. The state has received pushback from towns who do not want the facility in their locality.
 - J. Maloney (NT) shared that detention beds are a crisis in New York, especially New York City, and there is no place for youth to go when they are picked up by law enforcement, with the female population experiencing the greatest shortage. The summer months were very difficult regarding returns.
 - W. Dolan (RI) is working with the Rhode Island's Governor's Office on state council formation and appointments.
 - B. Moore (MA) said that 'Raise the Age' is again a topic of discussion at the Department of Youth Services, who already serves the population of youth up to 21. However, the current age of majority is 18. A bill is being introduced proposing an incremental increase to the age of majority.
 - E. Lee, Jr. (NJ) shared that detention is also an issue in New Jersey. In October, a conference to discuss alternatives to detention will occur. Staffing is one of the main issues. New Jersey is increasing training opportunities for new staff and potentially reopening detention centers.
 - S. Bland (NJ) said that New Jersey probation is doing an "ICJ road show," visiting all 15 New Jersey vicinages and holding Q&A sessions with officers, judges, team leaders, and others. Issues include adults who are on juvenile probation. For example, there is a 56-year-old currently on juvenile probation, which causes confusion with the receiving state regarding reporting requirements, registration, and supervision.
 - S. Kern (NY) shared that they supervised an adult under juvenile probation.
 - T. Hunt (CT) said that Connecticut works to keep youth under the juvenile system and asked what the practice of keeping adults on juvenile probation accomplishes.
 - S. Bland (NJ) is unsure why a judge would keep an adult on juvenile probation.
 - E. Lee, Jr. (NJ) explained that in that case, the community outrage led the judge to place her in a county jail, and subsequently probation.
 - B. Moore (MA) asked if the supervision could be transferred to adult probation.
 - E. Lee, Jr. (NJ) said that there is no mechanism to accomplish such a waiver of probation from juvenile to adult.
 - E. Lee, Jr. (NJ) said that in New Jersey, someone can stay in a juvenile facility up to age 25, and in some cases, up to the age of 27. The decision is made on a case-by-case basis. He also shared that state council appointments are under review.
 - R. Curtis (ME) shared that a defense attorney on the state council wants to propose an ICJ Rule amendment related to virtual hearings. He shared that he is rewriting internal ICJ policy and will conduct training.
 - T. Hunt (CT) shared that Connecticut no longer has committed delinquents. Juvenile justice responsibility is under the judicial branch. The Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee is responsible for setting policy around juvenile justice, which includes multiple stakeholders. That group is working to ensure more diversion opportunities exist while decreasing recidivism. Connecticut does still have juveniles in facilities, but the numbers are very small due to reform work at the front-end, by diverting more youth. They are also working to ensure that youth who were transferred to the adult system are

being moved back to the juvenile system where they can receive age-appropriate services. One struggle with this process is finding the facility space for these youth. The goal is to keep young people out of the adult system. She shared appreciation for Glenn Tapia's session earlier today on implementation science.

- E. Lee, Jr. (NJ) said that the biggest problem is adjusting the mindset of staff to work with youth for a longer period.
- T. Hunt (CT) said that they no longer have status offenders, which was difficult for staff to adjust to.
- S. Kern (NY) said that the state council met in September. She said that she was appointed as the deputy compact administrator in June. She plans to contact the New York ICPC office.
- M. Casey (DE) said that detention numbers have decreased in Delaware. He added that family court liaisons make recommendations for bail each morning, which requires gathering information about youths, including supervision status and contacting the family. A large part of the population are repeat offenders. They are having issues locating out of state residential treatment facilities. The state council meets biannually, in January and July. Jessica Wald (ND) and Sherry Jones (MD) were guests at a recent meeting and shared information about the ICJ. In July, a chief detective in the extradition unit presented their role within the Compact. He has monthly meetings with the youth rehabilitative service division to collaborate and problem-solve, which includes representatives from ICPC and the family courts.
- E. James (VI) said that Vaughn Walwyn and his staff on St. Thomas run the ICJ Office, including use of the UNITY system. Unfortunately, the other guests who were planning to attend the Annual Business Meeting from St. Croix did not make it. She suggested that the Virgin Islands has open beds for states that are experiencing shortages. The state council is active but experiences challenges with scheduling. She also offered that the Virgin Islands would be happy to host the Commission's Annual Business Meeting. She expressed her thanks to all states for their support with both the ICJ and ICPC.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) shared that the state's only detention facility will close soon, but a new, therapy-focused facility will be opening, which will have only 12 beds. The changes reflect juvenile justice reform. When juveniles are encountered by law enforcement, they are now referred to an agency that conducts an assessment to determine a recommendation for services. She said that some residential facilities and foster homes are refusing to take delinquent youth, who must be staffed at the detention center.
 - E. James (VI) shared a facility that the Virgin Islands works with Woodward Academy in the State of Iowa, which has a sex offender and residential unit. However, they will not accept youth with a diagnosis of autism.
 - E. Lee, Jr., (NJ) clarified that they do use alternatives to detention in New Jersey, but they sometimes receive pushback from judges and prosecutors who advocate for detention.

▪ Unfinished Business

- There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Elect East Regional Representative

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) shared information about the nominations and elections process and the current slate of ICJ Officers: Howard Wykes from Arizona for Commission Chairperson;

Caitlyn Bickford from New Hampshire for Commission Vice Chairperson; and Dale Dodd from New Mexico and Sherry Jones from Maryland for Treasurer.

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) reported that Trissie Casanova, full-time designee from Vermont was nominated in advance for the East Regional Representative position. She opened the floor for other nominations. There were no other candidates nominated for the position.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) announced that Trissie Casanova was elected as the East Regional Representative by acclamation.

Discuss how to ensure safety during the home evaluation process, when background checks are required

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) introduced the topic of background and abuse/neglect checks for adults with whom the juvenile will be residing in the receiving state, such as relatives or fictive kin. She opened the floor for discussion.
- T. Hunt (CT) said that Connecticut does not currently have a protocol in place for ICJ cases regarding checks of adults in the home. Instead, the ICJ Office relies on the assessment of the home and information gleaned from the interview process.
- B. Moore (MA) said that Massachusetts has a policy regarding non-guardian placements.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) clarified that the topic is related to the receiving state perspective, but also indicated that they should discuss the matter from the sending state perspective. She said that New Hampshire currently has no practice regarding either of the two scenarios. Local officers occasionally reach out to local law enforcement.
- B. Moore (MA) said that using the word “safe” leaves room for discretion and bias that could harm black and brown youth.
- T. Casanova (VT) clarified that an objective measure would be used, such as determining if the adult was on the child abuse registry. She said that one agency may be assuming another agency is doing this, but in reality, no one may be conducting such checks.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) said that she has not experienced any issues related to this. She added that the ICJ Home Evaluation section regarding the “Legal History” could be utilized to obtain this information.
- T. Casanova (VT) said that an adult in the home may omit information about certain offenses.
- E. Breitigan (DE) shared that Delaware is not doing background checks, but they do have access to the child welfare system to investigate significant history.
- T. Hunt (CT) said that within Connecticut, she can determine whether a person has criminal involvement. She questioned what the line is regarding approval of a placement, depending on what information is discovered.
- B. Moore (MA) cautioned that ambiguous determinations may introduce bias.
- V. Walwyn (VI) shared that they use the child welfare home evaluation process, which is more in-depth and rigorous than the ICJ Home Evaluation.
- **R. Curtis (ME) made a motion to table the topic until the next East Region Meeting. T. Hunt (CT) seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Discuss Work Group on Returning Non-Delinquent Runaways

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) reported that the new work group will be formed after the Annual Business Meeting, which largely came out of the East Region Runaway Subcommittee and

subsequent survey findings. She asked the region to share their desire regarding the future of the subcommittee.

- T. Casanova (VT) said that there is discussion regarding potential rule amendments, pending a review of the survey results at the next East Region meeting.

New Business

- B. Moore (MA) suggested reviewing the Travel Reimbursement Policy regarding parking fee limits. The region discussed the process for requesting reimbursement that exceed the policy limits.
- T. Hunt (CT) shared concern regarding the ground transportation limits.
- J. Adkins shared that Section VI, paragraph C of the policy indicates that the Executive Director may approve costs in excess of the policy limits, as long as support documentation is supplied.
- R. Curtis (ME) thanked Representative Bickford for her service as regional representative.

Adjourn

Regional Representative C. Bickford (NH) adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 5:21 p.m. CT.