



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge

www.nycourts.gov/press

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NYS Commission on Parental Legal Representation to Hold Public Hearings in Four Regions of the State

New York – The New York State Commission on Parental Legal Representation, established by Chief Judge Janet DiFiore in February 2018, will be holding public hearings in the coming months in Rochester, New York City, Albany and Long Island to gather information on existing services and suggestions for reforms to ensure quality, cost-effective mandated parental legal representation for parties eligible for assigned counsel in family law cases. In New York, indigent parents and other specified adults in cases involving child abuse and neglect, foster care placement or termination of parental rights, among other matters, have the right to the assistance of court-appointed and compensated counsel.

The Commission, led by Hon. Karen Peters and made up of judges, legal service providers, child welfare experts, and county and state officials, will examine a range of issues, including the adequacy of current rates for assigned counsel services (County Law Article 18-B); the responsibility of the State vs. the counties for funding mandated parental representation; when the right to counsel should attach; the criteria for determining eligibility for assigned counsel; and the challenges in rural counties.

“The information and suggestions for reform to be elicited from these public hearings will prove vital in moving the Commission forward as it strives to build upon the groundwork being done across the State to improve the quality of mandated parental legal representation,” said Chief Judge DiFiore.

The Commission welcomes written comments and will be convening four public hearings as follows:

September 13, 2018, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., 50 East Avenue, Suite 200, Rochester

September 27, 2018, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 27 Madison Avenue, Manhattan

October 10, 2018, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Justice Bldg., State St., Room 511, Albany

October 23, 2018, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 100 Supreme Court Drive, Mineola, LI

Written submissions, including those from persons who wish to testify orally, must be sent to parentrepresent@nycourts.gov by **August 16, 2018**. Those who would like to be invited to testify must email parentrepresent@nycourts.gov at least 20 days in advance of the hearing with the subject line "Oral Testimony Request." More information is contained in the Commission's Public Hearings Notice, available at www.nycourts.gov. A brief survey, which may be completed on its own or as a complement to testimony, will be available at www.nycourts.gov.

A list of the Commission members follows.

Commission on Parental Legal Representation

Chair

Hon. Karen K. Peters
Presiding Justice, Appellate Division, Third Dept. (Retired)

Members

Hon. Kevin M. Carter
Erie County Family Court Judge

Michele Cortese, Esq.
Executive Director, Center for Family Representation

Hon. Kathie E. Davidson
Administrative Judge, Ninth Judicial District

Hon. Craig Doran
Administrative Judge, Seventh Judicial District

Linda Gehron, Esq.
President and CEO, Hiscock Legal Aid Society

Martin Guggenheim
Professor, NYU School of Law

Michael Hein
Ulster County Executive

Barbara J. Kelley, Esq.
Allegany County Public Defender

Hon. Dean Kusakabe
Kings County Family Court Judge

Susan B. Lindenauer, Esq.
Chair, Families and the Law Committee, New York State Bar Association

Tasha Lloyd, Esq.
Associate Counsel, NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Hon. Gayle P. Roberts
Bronx County Family Court Judge

Sarah Rogerson
Professor and Director, Immigration Law Clinic, Albany Law School

Tim Ross, PhD.
Managing Partner, Action Research Partners

Hon. Jeanette Ruiz
Administrative Judge, New York City Family Court

Jeannette Vega
Parent Advocate Training Director, RISE Magazine

Hon. Margaret T. Walsh
Albany County Family Court Judge and Acting Supreme Court Justice

Hon. Theresa Whelan
Supervising Judge, Suffolk County Family Court

Michael Williams
Chief Clerk, Suffolk County Family Court

Ex Officio

Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson
Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives

Consultants

Angela Olivia Burton, Esq., *Special Adviser*
Director of Quality Enhancement, Parent Representation
NYS Office of Indigent Legal Services

Cynthia Feathers, Esq., *Appellate Consultant*
Director of Quality Enhancement for Appellate and Post-Conviction Representation
NYS Office of Indigent Legal Services

Betsy Ruslander, Esq., *Consultant*
Director, Office of Attorneys for Children, Appellate Division, Third Dept.

William C. Silverman, Esq., *Consultant*
Partner, Proskauer Rose LLP

Counsel

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Deputy Counsel, NYS Office of Court Administration

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Assistant Deputy Counsel, NYS Office of Court Administration