

INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR JUVENILES

East Region Meeting Minutes



September 26, 2023
4:00 p.m. MST
Sheraton Salt Lake City

Commissioners/Designees in Attendance:

1. Caitlyn Bickford (NH), Commissioner, East Region Representative
2. Patricia Casanova (VT), Designee, East Region Alternate Representative
3. Tasha Hunt (CT), Commissioner
4. Francis "Mike" Casey (DE), Commissioner
5. Becki Moore (MA), Commissioner
6. A. Roy Curtis (ME), Commissioner
7. Edwin Lee, Jr., (NJ), Designee
8. Pam Weinman (NY), Designee
9. Natalie Mwaniki (PA), Designee
10. Bill Dolan (RI), Designee
11. Eavey Monique-James (USVI), Commissioner

Commissioners/Designees not in Attendance:

1. Christine Norris (DE), Designee
2. Jennifer LeBaron (NJ), Commissioner
3. Suzanne Miles-Gustave (NY), Commissioner
4. Wendy Lautsbaugh (PA), Commissioner
5. Jessica Nash (RI), Commissioner
6. Barbara Joyal (VT), Commissioner

Non-voting Compact Staff in Attendance:

1. Nordia Napier (CT), Designee
2. Erin Breitigan (DE), Deputy Compact Administrator
3. Erin Laskowski (NH), Compact Office Staff
4. Shyra Bland (NJ), Deputy Compact Administrator
5. Shaina Kern (NY), Compact Office Staff
6. Vaughn Walwyn (USVI), Deputy Compact Administrator

National Office Staff in Attendance:

1. Jenny Adkins, Operations and Policy Specialist

Call to Order

Representative C. Bickford (NH) called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. MST.

Roll Call

Jenny Adkins, National Office staff, called the roll and a quorum was established.

Agenda

E. Lee, Jr. (NJ) made a motion to approve the agenda. B. Moore (MA) seconded. Representative Bickford indicated the agenda was approved by unanimous consent without objection.

Minutes

R. Curtis (ME) made a motion to approve the minutes from July 13, 2023 meeting as presented. P. Weinman (NY) seconded. Representative Bickford (NH) indicated the minutes were approved by unanimous consent without objection.

Discussion

Hot Topics:

▪ 2023 ICJ Rule Proposals

Rule 5-103A

- T. Hunt (CT) voiced concerns about the proposed new Rule 5-103A, suggesting the sending state is not able to deny the failed supervision return when the receiving state determines that the supervision has failed.
- C. Bickford (NH) remarked that Chair Torres previously said the Technology Committee would consider amending the UNITY data management system to allow the sending state to deny the request, as currently the UNITY task does not allow the sending state to deny.
- T. Casanova (VT) noted that this is currently an issue. The proposal separates the violation reporting process from the failed supervision process.
- R. Curtis (ME) explained that the Rules Committee sent comments to the Technology Committee to clarify because some folks were not using the failed supervision event in UNITY correctly. Creating a separate rule is intended to clarify which process to use. This would still allow both states to work on another placement option in the receiving state. The juvenile is not automatically required to return to the sending state. Maine found that using the UNITY failed supervision event for two returns expedited getting the youth back to the home state, as opposed to using the violation report process. The burden is on the sending state to find an alternative placement.
- T. Hunt (CT) asked if the proposal clarifies the issue.
- R. Curtis (ME) responded that it is the intent of the proposal to clarify the process. The language regarding the receiving state working with the sending state to find an alternative placement remains in the proposal. In some situations, the cases are related to kinship care placements.
- T. Hunt (CT) asked if the fiscal impact related to UNITY includes an option for the sending state to deny the return.
- C. Bickford (NH) said that there would be a fiscal impact to include that if it's not clearly part of the proposal. She further highlighted the fiscal impact of \$50,750 to make changes to UNITY.
- R. Curtis (ME) said that Chair Torres could also clarify the UNITY impact.

Rule 8-101

- P. Weinman (NY) reported that the New York State Council reviewed the Rules Committee's proposal to Rule 8-101. The ICJ Office used the opportunity to educate the council on the current rule and UNITY requirements. There was not a consensus within the state council regarding whether to support the proposal. The Interstate Commission on Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS) requires reporting instructions, and staff who work with both compacts have different opinions about how travel permits should be used. The state council asked for her to mention that they had robust discussion.
- C. Bickford (NH) asked if the Commission could have provided any additional materials or information to assist NY ICJ with their state council meeting.
- P. Weinman (NY) said that part of the issue was new staff on the state council. They did use the resource with the chart that was provided to clarify the impact of the proposal.

Rule 4-102

- N. Napier (CT) spoke up regarding the proposal to Rule 4-102 by the Midwest Region and wondered what stops states from using the existing functionality to communicate with the other state regarding what resources are available.
- C. Bickford (NH) said that the difficulty may come with larger states that have more staff.
- N. Napier (CT) read the rule proposal and said that perhaps the Case Communication function in UNITY could be used to accomplish the intent of the rule.
- C. Bickford (NH) explained that some ICJ Offices make themselves the point of contact, instead of a local office; the family could call the ICJ Office to get information. Some families are anxious about the process and need assistance. She asked the region to consider what is in the best interest of the family and juvenile, such as having someone in the receiving state help explain the process and connect the juvenile to services. Every state would have to decide how to manage, train, and roll out their process to locals. Currently, the New Hampshire ICJ Office sends the case out as soon as possible and ensures they make contact with the family.
- F. Casey (DE) said the intent is similar to the Rule 4-104 proposal. While certain responses are understood as "best practices," the rules need to be explicit to ensure that the expectations are clear and understood. For example, the new "Best Practice: Home Evaluation Considerations for Unconventional Families" explains what states should be doing. While the content may be considered "common sense," it needs to be explicitly written in the rule, as someone may not get the information required to make the best decision, or may have to go back to locals to understand the justification for the decision. The new best practice has allowed him to go back to locals and point out the best way to handle home evaluations to get the best outcome for the juvenile, family, and communities. He suggested bolstering the ICJ Rules to address discrepancies and inequities, and taking to address these issues.

Rule 4-102 and 4-104

- B. Moore (MA) reflected on the Rule 4-102 and 4-104 proposals, citing that both address equity issues. She encouraged the region to consider a family moving to a new state who may not understand the ICJ process. These youth may have a lot of needs and the family may need the support to navigate the process. The Commission should support accountability for home evaluation denials by recording the justification to deny which will help us address issues related to bias. She indicated that “The What” is the data, while “The How” is determining why home evaluations are denied and changing the rule to ensure everyone is on the same page to seek equity and reduce bias in decision making. She indicated support for both rule proposals.

▪ Effective Strategies for Training Locals

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) asked the region members for comments related to the ABM training provided earlier in the day by H. Kassube and J. Wald.
- N. Napier (CT) said that the new ICJ presentation created by A. Cabbagestalk is very visually appealing. She has modified the training materials for her state. She encouraged members to utilize the resource and reach out the Amanee at the National Office to assist. T. Hunt (CT) voiced support for using the ICJ presentation which N. Napier used at a recent in-state training, noting it to be a very useful tool.
- N. Napier (CT) said they also regularly send out the UNITY email tips to their staff.
- S. Kern (NY) echoed the praise for the training materials.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) agreed and said they plan to utilize and customize for in-state use. The rule amendments for Spring 2024 will require in-state training, and the session presented will be useful as states plan how to update their locals.

▪ Published Toolkit on Returns and Child Welfare

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) updated the region on the newly released Toolkit on Returns and Child Welfare, which was spearheaded by the West Region. The new resource is available on the Commission’s website and will be highlighted during the General Session on Wednesday.
- E. James (USVI) commented that the recently published resources are helpful, especially because of the low volume of ICJ cases in the U.S. Virgin Islands, which are primarily dealt with by Vaughn Walwyn. The resources are useful for members with infrequent cases, especially when issues arise related to educating judges. She is thankful for any resources they can use to bring stakeholders up to speed on ICJ requirements.
- S. Kern (NY) issued encouraging words to the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- E. James (USVI) said thank you and shared a recent challenging case with the region and praised the efforts of Vaughn Walwyn.
- V. Walwyn (USVI) said that they have a new presiding judge over the court system. They have hopes that she will support ICJ in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Non-delinquent Runaways & NCIC

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) recognized that the region has had many discussions at the end of meetings regarding non-delinquent runaways and NCIC. The Executive Committee discussed the issue at their meeting. She opened the floor for comments and concerns related to what resources the region may want to create or suggest.
- T. Casanova (VT) supported the creation of a resource.
- R. Curtis (ME) said that due to many recent conversations, a law enforcement resource card may be useful to help them identify victims of human trafficking specifically. He would like to consider how that issue could be incorporated.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) said that the issues go beyond non-delinquent runaways and law enforcement are often first people to come into contact with these individuals. A lot of resources exist for judges, but there is nothing specific to law enforcement. If the region is interested in pursuing, a subcommittee or work group could be created to explore options.
- E. James (USVI) said that law enforcement always thinks any issue goes to the Department of Human Services. Any suggestions to get everyone at the table to determine the proper outcomes is important.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) said that if the region wants to take on this project, we would need a motion to start a work group.
- **T. Casanova (VT) made a motion to create a work group to look at challenges with non-delinquent runaways and to create a resource such as a best practice for law enforcement. E. James (USVI) seconded. Ten (10) approved, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions. The motion passed.**
- B. Moore (MA) suggested considering how law enforcement consume information. A small card may be best as an easily digestible resource. E. James (USVI) commented that she notices that law enforcement like to come to trainings so they can ask questions, and they are also able to articulate their own misconceptions. In-person trainings facilitate conversations between both parties.
- B. Moore (MA) said that law enforcement officers digest information differently than field staff, and that perhaps multi-media resources are the best approach.
- T. Casanova (VT) said that establishing relationships with law enforcement officers is important, as many do not know about the ICJ.
- F. Casey (DE) asked whether the Commission has a relationship with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).
- T. Hunt (CT) said there is work in progress on the issue of returns, especially related to efforts to connect with ex officio members such as the National Runaway Safeline (NRS). She asked if another committee should be a part of this.
- T. Casanova (VT) said that delinquents are more cut-and-dry; but non-delinquent runaways are the issue, and those kids are just as vulnerable. This creates problems in other states related to holding these youth in order to get them home. Vermont has issues with warrants, but they ensure that these youth get put into NCIC so they can be picked-up.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) explained that the region can start with the work group but could refer something to another committee. She said that future partnerships are in the works which will assist us with learning more about the issue.
- M. Casey (DE) commented that Delaware had issues when they contacted law enforcement to pick-up youth. While law enforcement officers have specific

protocols, mentioning NCMEC increases the likelihood of a response. Commissioner Casey volunteered to be a part of the work group.

- E. James (USVI) said that the U.S. Marshals came to St. Croix to partner up with locals to encourage stakeholders to utilize their services. She asked if other have had similar experiences. T. Hunt (CT) said that she has seen similar things from the FBI related to domestic terrorism and juvenile justice regarding school-based threats and violence.

State Updates

- Representative C. Bickford (NH) welcomed Bill Dolan from Rhode Island and asked for states to provide updates.
- M. Casey (DE) said that they are having regular monthly meetings with youth rehabilitative services and regional administrators to discuss ICJ concerns. They forward the weekly UNITY/Tableau reports about quarterly progress report and home evaluation due dates every week so they can assist their staff. The meetings have helped to create a stronger relationship. He invited J. Wald (ND) and S. Jones (MD) to their recent state council meeting as guests to discuss the proposal to Rule 4-104. The strategy of considering the issue from a broader viewpoint was well-received by the council.
- Representative C. Bickford (NH) welcomed Natalie Mwaniki (PA), Pam Weinman (NY), and Shaina Kern (NY).

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjourn

Representative Bickford thanked the region and said she looks forward to future region discussions and adjourned the meeting by acclamation without objection at 5:07 p.m. MST.