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Advisory Council Seeks to Improve Child Support Program

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is encouraging Ohioans to suggest improvements to Ohio’s child support program.

Every four years, ODJFS convenes the Child Support Guidelines Advisory Council, a stakeholder group tasked with recommending improvements to Ohio’s child support laws and policies. The 2013 advisory council is currently meeting and will conclude its work with a report to the General Assembly in March 2013.

The advisory council will hold a public meeting at 10 a.m. on October 19 in the former Lazarus Building at 50 W. Town Street, Columbus, Ohio. Interested parties are encouraged to attend and give testimony. The advisory council also encourages Ohioans to offer suggestions online at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/Ocs/employers/OCSGuidelinesCouncilOverview.stm>.

“This council has a well-rounded group of individuals to devise thoughtful answers to serious questions pertaining to domestic relations laws,” said Dorothy Pelanda, a member of the Ohio House of Representatives and a council participant. “We need to be willing to make some changes to better serve the citizens of Ohio.”

Among other initiatives, the 2013 advisory council will study possible changes to the schedule of support obligations. Research conducted over the last 10 years in several states, including California and Washington, shows that support obligations larger than 20 percent of an individual’s gross income may lead to larger arrearages.

“There is a need for these issues to be reviewed and adjusted,” said Rep. Pelanda. “Finances, along with the family dynamic, have changed dramatically since the early 1990s when these concepts were last visited. There is an opportunity every four years to make your voice heard in a public forum on the topic of child support. The Child Support Guidelines Council offers a chance for the real-life experiences of Ohioans to be heard and hopefully improve the child support system for future generations.”

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