
Commission on Parenting Time Guidelines
Draft Meeting Minutes
Best Western Ramkota
2111 N. Lacrosse St.
Rapid City, SD (Sheridan)
Monday, September 15, 2025
6:00 p.m. MT
Zoom

Members Present: Judge Christina Klinger, Representative Brandei Schaeffbauer, Shanna Moke, Kylie Riggins, Ryon Rypkema, and Senator Tom Pischke.

Others Present: Caroline Srstka, UJS Staff Attorney, and members of the public Eric Grover, Melissa McCauley, Shane O'Connor, Krista Heeren-Graber, Zach Martin, and Nick Toth.

Call to Order: Riggins called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Commission members introduced themselves.

Roll call: Judge Klinger, Representative Schaeffbauer, Moke, Riggins, Rypkema and Senator Pischke were present. Kienholz was absent.

Purpose of the Commission: Riggins opened the meeting by welcoming members and introducing the purpose of the Commission, which is to review the existing parenting time guidelines and provide recommended updates. The goal is to identify areas that may benefit from clarification or revision, especially for use in cases where parents are unable to come to agreement on their own.

Approval of Agenda: Senator Pischke moved to approve the agenda of the September 15, 2025, meeting and public hearing. The motion was seconded by Moke. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes: Motion to approve the August 25, 2025, draft minutes by Senator Pischke. The motion was seconded by Moke. Motion carried.

Public Hearing/Discussion: During the public hearing, Eric Grover, provided a summary of his submitted recommendations. He stated that the guidelines should not apply in situations involving domestic violence and argued that age categories should reflect developmental stages rather than safety concerns. He also suggested rewording the minimum framework for clarity and updating language to focus on developmental outcomes. Grover emphasized that guidelines should allow for increased parenting time beyond the ages of three to five and cautioned against treating the first option as a presumption or precedent. He also noted the absence of vacation time for children under age three and recommended including provisions for spring and winter breaks. Additional suggestions included adding stronger language against parental alienation, clarifying sibling references to include half-siblings, and revising language around the concept of maintaining the "status quo," noting that a significant percentage of children are born outside of

wedlock. Finally, Grover encouraged a stronger emphasis on shared parenting and joint physical custody, describing this as the ultimate goal.

Zach Martin also spoke in favor of more robust parenting time guidelines, stressing that stronger minimum standards would reduce litigation, minimize conflict, and provide children with greater time with noncustodial parents. He stated that such changes would help children build lasting relationships and ease parental disputes.

Nick Toth shared his personal experience of pursuing 50/50 custody, which he described as both financially and emotionally burdensome. He argued that making 50/50 custody the default would reduce litigation, decrease parental conflict, and serve the best interests of children. He advocated for systemic changes that would make custody evaluations more accessible, including the possibility of state-funded evaluations with repayment plans.

Committee members responded with additional discussion. Riggins observed that South Dakota courts can reassign attorney's fees, and she expressed support for stronger accountability when parents abuse the legal system. Rypkema inquired about how often courts impose costs on aggressor parents. Senator Pischke questioned whether custody evaluations could be state-funded or structured with repayment options to reduce the financial burden on families. Members acknowledged that while the committee does not have authority to alter state law, they can provide recommendations for changes to the guidelines.

Senator Pischke moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second from Rypkema. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m. MT.