

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2002

**PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULED FOR SUPREME COURT SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES**

The Special Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Child Custody Issues will hold a public hearing on Friday, June 28 focusing on the termination of parental rights in cases of juvenile abuse and neglect.

The hearing is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. in Room C-500 of the State of Illinois Building at 160 N. LaSalle Street in Chicago.

Members of the public, legal practitioners and child welfare professionals are invited to give their comments either through testimony at the hearing or by submitting written materials.

The hearing is being held by the Subcommittee on Termination of Parental Rights of the Special Supreme Court Committee. The goal is to identify ways to improve the process of terminating parental rights and to ensure timely, appropriate outcomes for children.

“This is the most serious and critical issue that we have before us,” said Judge Alan J. Greiman of the Illinois Appellate Court in Cook County, who is chairman of the Special Committee. “Nothing could be more terrible to parents than losing their children.

“We hope to develop methods that are fair to the parties involved and which speed the disposition of children’s cases so that the children are not in limbo, and there is as little delay as possible in developing their permanent situation.”

Anyone who wishes to provide written comments or to seek to testify at the hearing should advise the subcommittee no later than Friday, June 21, 2002. Written comments and requests to testify should be addressed to:

Special Supreme Court Committee on Child Custody Issues
C/O Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
222 N. LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601

MORE

Special Supreme Court Committee on Child Custody

Testimony and comments should focus on these issues:

- The timely initiation of proceedings to terminate parental rights when other alternatives are inappropriate;
- The timely hearing and resolution of petitions for termination of parental rights;
- The coordination of termination cases with other pending cases affecting child custody;
- The representation of parents in termination cases;
- The representation of children in termination cases;
- The timely resolution of appeals in termination cases.

Those seeking permission to testify or submitting written comments are asked to list their organization, agency or employer and include their daytime telephone number and facsimile number.

It is requested that testimony not refer to specific, pending cases.

Media coverage is invited and those media wishing to attend are asked to contact Joseph Tybor, press secretary for the Illinois Supreme Court at 312-793-2323.

The Special Committee was established by the Illinois Supreme Court Jan. 30, 2002 to study child custody, parental termination and adoption issues. It is composed of Judge Greiman and 14 other judges from around the state who are familiar and experienced in child custody issues.

Illinois Supreme Court Justices Thomas R. Fitzgerald and Rita B. Garman serve as Supreme Court liaisons to the Special Committee.

Members of the subcommittee holding the hearing are:

Circuit Court Judge Patricia Martin Bishop of the Circuit Court of Cook County; Circuit Court Judge Robert J. Anderson of the 18th Judicial Circuit, Wheaton; Circuit Court Judge Nelson F. Metz of the 3rd Judicial Circuit in Edwardsville; Associate Judge Michael W. Stuttley of the Cook County Circuit Court; Circuit Court Judge Peter Ault of the 10th Judicial Circuit in Pekin; and Associate Judge Dennis J. Burke of the Circuit Court of Cook County.