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Coming in January: Public Forums for the 2021 Massachusetts Child Support Guidelines Task Force

Virtual public hearings on the 2021 Massachusetts Child Support Guidelines are scheduled on January 21, 22 and 26, 2021 via Zoom.

On January 7, 2021, the Massachusetts Trial Court [provided public notice](#) that the state Child Support Task Force will hold three virtual forums seeking public comment on the 2021 Massachusetts Child Support Guidelines. The three virtual forums, which will be held on Zoom, are open to the public and schedule for the following three days:

- January 21, 2021, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
- January 22, 2021, from 11 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- January 26, 2021, from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

The Task Force is limiting comments from members of the public to three minutes and is also accepting written submission by email before January 26, 2020, as follows:

The forums are an opportunity to make a brief statement to members of the Task Force. Oral testimony is limited to 3 minutes per person and should not refer to specifics about a speaker's court case. The Task Force also encourages people to email written testimony or comments to childsupport@jud.state.ma.us by January 26, 2020.

How to Participate in the Public Forums for New Child Support Guidelines

Individuals who would like to speak at the forum must send an email in advance to reserve a speaking slot at least 15 minutes before a scheduled session. The Trial Court describes this process as follows:

If you would like to speak at a forum, please send an email in advance to childsupport@jud.state.ma.us to register. The email must include your full name, your affiliation (if any), your phone number and email address, and the date you would like to speak. Please also include in the subject line of your email the date you would like to speak. You may register by email up to 15 minutes before each forum begins.

Zoom Login Information for Joining Virtual Public Forums

The login info to join the meeting via Zoom is below:

Join ZoomGov Meeting:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1600053895?pwd=TFI3cUVV4YVJjQTIDdXVHeDFPSWh4dz09>

Meeting ID: 160 005 3895

Passcode: 352589

One tap mobile

+16692545252,,1600053895#,,,,,0#,,352589# US (San Jose)

+16468287666,,1600053895#,,,,,0#,,352589# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 669 254 5252 US (San Jose)

+1 646 828 7666 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 160 005 3895

Passcode: 352589

Find your local number: <https://www.zoomgov.com/u/abPVxTBlSr>

Join by SIP

1600053895@sip.zoomgov.com

Join by H.323

161.199.138.10 (US West)

161.199.136.10 (US East)

Meeting ID: 160 005 3895

Passcode: 352589

HTML for Video

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<p style="text-align:center;" class="video-size"><iframe src="
https://www.youtube.com/embed/uRckz\_RwPNk" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media;
gyroscope; picture-in-picture" allowfullscreen="" width="560" height="315"
frameborder="0"></iframe></p>
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What Issues Are Being Considered for 2021 Massachusetts Child Support Guidelines?

As discussed in depth in our [blog last week](#), multiple advocacy groups have made [written submissions](#) to the Task Force, including [Jane Does Well](#), the [Massachusetts Council on Family Mediation \(MCFM\)](#) and [Community Legal Aid](#). Among the major issues up for consideration for the current Task Force are:

- Will the Task Force raise child support Guidelines for all recipients for the first time since 2009?
- Will child support increase for families with multiple children?
- Will the Task Force encourage judges to order alimony and child support in the same case?
- Will Massachusetts expand Guidelines child support beyond the first \$250,000 of parents' combined income?
- Will the Task Force lift the 15% cost-sharing "cap" on childcare and medical insurance costs?
- Will the Task Force continue the 25% reduction in child support for children over 18?
- Will the Task Force include the hypothetical contribution of adult children to their own college expenses?
- Will the Task Force consider the rising cost of living in Massachusetts in a new child support formula?
- Will the Trial Court increase transparency in the Task Force process, including selection of the Task Force economic advisor?

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Jason V. Owens
Partner & Senior Counsel

As noted in our prior blogs, given the [lack of transparency](#) surrounding the Task Force, it is unclear how much weight the 2021 Task Force will give to public comments and/or written submissions by groups other than the Task Force's own economic consultants from the Brattle Group, who have been [vocal proponents for lower child support](#) in Massachusetts and nationwide.

[Jane Does Well](#), one of the advocacy groups featured in our last blog, is scheduled to offer public comment at the virtual hearing on Friday, January 26, 2020. You can read Jane Does Well's [written submission](#) to the 2021 Task Force [here](#).

About the Author: [Jason V. Owens](#) is a Massachusetts divorce lawyer and family law attorney for Lynch & Owens, located in [Hingham](#), Massachusetts and [East Sandwich](#), Massachusetts. He is also a mediator for [South Shore Divorce Mediation](#).

Schedule a consultation with [Jason V. Owens](#) today at [\(781\) 253-2049](#) or send [him an email](#).