



Policy Committee Meeting
January 17, 2023

Judge Judy Warne	Committee Chair
Amy Smith	HCDVCC
Thecia Jenkins	HCDVCC
Deputy Oscar Cisneros	HCSO
Celina Wells	KCM
Lt. Kira Webster	HPD- Family Violence
Mary McFaden	HCDA- DVD
Sonia Corrales	HAWC
Katharina Dechert	Tahirih
Veronyka James	Office of Justice and Safety
Shannon Fowler	UH/Downtown
Nakia Hanson	HCDVCC

Judge Judy Warne welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Judge Warne announced the Texas Legislative Session was up and running. She again has a spreadsheet and will monitoring bills that could affect protective orders and family violence. Bills of note:

HB 735- Mandatory Surrender of Firearms

HB 760- Require Law Enforcement and Court Personal to enter all P.O.'s in an outstanding warrant system.

Emergency Risk Protective Orders bills have been filed to address by behavior and threats not related to DV. Ideally, most would like to keep out of the DV PO language. Probate Judges around the State are concerned because they have mental health dockets and not sure how this will fit in. Judge Warne also announced that the previous discussion around a policy statement in regards to this committee is on hold.

Lt. Kira Webster was confused over what warrant database the PO's need to be entered into and she was concerned over the timeframe- next business day as opposed to 72 hours. Judge Warne thinks they want the PO's to be able to be pulled up in the same place as open warrants are pulled up.

Amy Smith thanked Judge Warne for the Bench Tip Sheet on Protective Orders. the one pager reference sheet for the Judges. Judge Warne said it was a hit at her presentation last week. Amy announced it will be mailed to the Harris County Judges soon. Amy also discussed to Federal Court cases that could affect gun surrenders in PO cases. Judge Warne discussed the cases and the one in the 14th Court of Appeals reversed a guns surrender on a life time PO but the case was an electronic stalking case where a gun was

never used or displayed. There is some concern that a trainwreck is coming soon concerning the language about gun surrender and POs. The PO language needs to be cleaned up, streamlined and updated.

Mary McFaden announced they are trying to add gun surrender to the Pre- Trial Intervention cases. She also announced a DV docket has been established to address the backlog of DV cases. Associate Judge David Singer is presiding over the court. She also announced that discussions to bring all POs back to the 280th are underway. Since 2021 over 1400 applicants have been turned away from DVD because the DA's Office could not handle POs for them. We are waiting for the next vote of the Family Court Judges on this matter.

Celina Wells announced that Katy Christian Ministries is coming off a long holiday break and has the same issues of keeping staff. Several people with Masters are applying to be advocates and then moving on as soon as they find something in their field. KCM is starting a Teen Dating Violence Support Group. She is also excited about the DVAF funds coming their way.

Sonia Corrales is the Co-Chair of TCFV's Policy Committee announced that 2 issues on the TCFV Legislative Agenda needed additional information including amending POs with Respondent's compliance with gun surrender. Judge Warne stated as long as the federal cases are up in the air it will be hard to enforce since gun surrender is voluntary and there is no one with standing to ask that respondent be put in jail since the PO is a final order. The other issue is a statewide gun surrender but too many counties do not have the money to fund storage and surrender. Judge Warne also mentioned that the Family Law Foundation is looking at the PO statutes that need amending because they are spread over several Codes. Sonia also announced that TCFV/TAASA's Capitol Day is on Thursday Feb. 16th.

Deputy Oscar Cisneros stated that in 2022 the HCSO received 34 orders for a total surrender of 105 guns. 5 guns were returned in 2022 and 3 were destroyed. Since the beginning they have received 69 orders and have had 173 guns surrendered.

Katharina Dechert announced she is watching HB 505 about increasing penalties on the hindering of the investigation on sex crimes against children. This might have an impact of DV survivors.

Amy announced we will continue to meet by ZOOM. Our next meeting February 21st at 2:00.