



National Child Support Enforcement Association

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Member of the U. S. House of Representatives
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Representative:

We are sending this letter to request your strong support of House Bill 1386. The Bill was introduced by Mr. McDermott, is pending in the House Ways and Means Committee, and already enjoys the co-sponsorship of 30 of your colleagues. If you are not already a co-sponsor, we urge you to contact Mr. McDermott. A briefing on the impact of the funding reductions is scheduled for Friday July 13 from 11 am until noon in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room G11. We hope that you can attend.

When Congress passed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, it reduced the funding for the Child Support Enforcement program in three ways: 1) the authority for states to use performance incentives as a match for federal dollars was repealed; 2) the federal match available for genetic testing used in the establishment of paternity was reduced from 90% of costs to 66%; and 3) a collection fee for all never TANF cases in which the state collects \$500 or more in a year was imposed. HR 1386 would repeal the first of these three funding reductions. An identical bill, S 803, has been introduced in the Senate and enjoys broad bi-partisan support.

The Congressional Budget Office has determined \$11 billion in child support will go uncollected in the next ten years even if states are able to supply revenue to make up for one-half of the federal cuts. That translates to a lot of money for families in your district that our colleagues will be unable to collect, a lot of families who have become self-supporting who will return to the TANF program, and a lot of families who will need to receive other assistance such as food stamps, housing and medical assistance.

Since the inception of the child support enforcement program in 1975, the Congress has provided strong leadership to assure that parents meet their financial responsibilities for their children. Congress has long enacted laws that provide the basis for a uniform program operating in all states and territories. On average 30% of child support cases require the co-operation of two or more states. Congress has been rightly concerned that these cases obtain the same level of service as other in-state cases. This has resulted in added benefit by ensuring that more children receive adequate health care coverage because their cases are enforced across state lines.

This effective interstate case processing system that has evolved in recent years is at risk as states begin to address priorities and manage reduced resources in response to the federal funding cuts.

From its earliest beginnings, the child support enforcement program has enjoyed strong bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate. That support has been due, in large measure, to the program's continuing and ever-more impressive success over time. In 2004 the program received the highest effectiveness rating among federal social services programs formula and block grant programs assessed by the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). More recently, a report from the Congressional Research Service entitled, "Children in Poverty: Profile, Trends and Issues," (January 2007) indicated that the child support enforcement program is second only to the Earned Income Tax Credit in effectively combating child poverty.

Because of its demonstrated success over the years, Congress made the program an integral part of its comprehensive efforts to end poverty. The program operates in all states as provided by Title IV-D of the federal Social Security Act. The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, together with state and local child support agencies, has established productive partnerships with a large and varied group of stakeholders:

- Courts and law enforcement officials carry out many of the day to day functions;
- Employers collect approximately 70% of child support through income withholding;
- Hospitals assist with paternity acknowledgment; and,
- Multiple other state and local agencies provide enforcement services and related services to assist obligors in finding and maintaining employment.

We represent five (5) national or regional organizations whose members are dedicated to the administration of the national child support program. We share a common mission that is reflected in the program's National Strategic Plan:

To enhance the well being of children by assuring that assistance in obtaining support, including financial and medical, is available to children through locating parents, establishing paternity, establishing support obligations, and monitoring and enforcing those obligations.

The combined memberships of the National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA), the Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association (ERICSA) and the Western Interstate Child Support Enforcement Council (WICSEC) includes public child support administrators, caseworkers, judges, court masters, hearing officers, government and private attorneys, social workers, advocates, and corporations that partner with government to provide child support services. The National Council of Child Support Directors' (NCCSD) members are the directors of the child support programs of the states, territories and the District of Columbia. The National Tribal Child Support Association represents child support staff of the child support programs administered by tribes.

Together, our organizations work to provide training services and policy and program development with a goal of improving our combined ability to collect child support from parents and ensure the financial and emotional well being of children. We stand ready to provide you details on what we do, how our members use federal funds, the impact of funding reductions, our

efforts to improve the quality of our services to families, and any other information you need to make an informed decision.

As we continue to improve our program at the national, state, and local level, your leadership is critical. Your support of HR 1386 will continue on-going leadership of the Congress and the recognition of the importance of the regular receipt of child support to the children of our nation. We appreciate all your hard work on behalf of families. Please call upon us if you need additional information.

Sincerely,



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National Child Support Enforcement
Association



Alisha Griffin, President
National Council of Child
Support Directors



David Stillman, President
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