

**NEVADA STATE DIVISION OF WELFARE & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM  
MANUAL AMENDMENTS**

The public hearing to adopt the Child Support Enforcement Program Manual Amendments was brought to order by Nova Murray, Deputy Administrator of Field Operations Support, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 5, 2017. This meeting was video-conferenced between the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Professional Development Center, 701 N. Rancho Drive, Training Room 5, Las Vegas, Nevada and Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Central Office, 1470 College Parkway, Room 149, Carson City, Nevada.

**STAFF PRESENT IN THE NORTH:**

Nova Murray, Deputy Administrator, Field Operations Support  
Julie Balderson, SSPS 3, Administration  
Jenelle Gimlin, Program Chief, Child Support Enforcement  
David Castagnola, SSPS 3, Child Support Enforcement  
Kim Smalley, Program Specialist, Child Support Enforcement  
Rose Ramos, Program Specialist, Child Support Enforcement  
Cathy Kaplan, SSPS 3, Child Support Enforcement  
Danielle Loomis, SSPS 3, Child Support Enforcement  
Melody Hall Ramirez, SSPS 1, Child Support Enforcement  
Casandra Davis, SSPS 1, Child Support Enforcement

**STAFF PRESENT IN THE SOUTH**

**None**

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

**North**

Deandrea Ceccarelli, Public  
Leandra Copeland, Fiscal Analyst, LCB

**South**

**None**

Ms. Murray opened the public hearing at 2:00 p.m. and explained how the hearing will proceed, explaining that this public hearing was noticed in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and posted on the Division's website. All present were requested to sign in and provide their e-mail addresses to be included on the Division's mailing list.

**\*I. CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT MANUAL AMENDMENT:**

David Castagnola described a proposed amendment to an existing state regulation, specifying that an enforcing authority must conduct a review of a child support order after learning that a parent who owes support will be incarcerated for more than 180 calendar days.

Pursuant to 45 CFR 303.8(b)(2) the State may elect in its IV-D state plan to initiate review of an order, after learning that a noncustodial parent will be incarcerated for more than 180 calendar days, without the need for a specific request from one of the parties, and, if appropriate, adjust the order in accordance with the state child support guidelines.

The majority of federal and state prisoners are parents, and many have child support orders that were established before incarceration. Incarceration can result in the accumulation of high levels of child support debt because parents have little to no ability to earn income while they are incarcerated and reduced ability to pay off the debt when released. Nationally, studies find that incarcerated parents leave prison with an average of \$20,000 or more in unpaid child support, with no means to pay upon release. This accumulated child support debt is rarely paid. Research finds that uncollectible debt substantially reduces noncustodial parent earnings, which in turn reduces child support payments to their families. One study found that people released from jail are unemployed nine weeks more per year and annual earnings are reduced by 40%. On the other hand, reducing uncollectible debt can increase payments.

In keeping with the underlying federal regulation, the goal of this proposed regulation is to increase consistent child support payments for children by setting child support orders based on the noncustodial parent's earnings, income, or other evidence of ability to pay, including for incarcerated parents. Children do not benefit when their parents engage in a cycle of nonpayment, underground income generation, and re-incarceration. Support orders modified for incarcerated parents, based on their current ability to pay, result in less debt accrual, more formal employment, more child support payments, and less need for enforcement after they are released.

Nevada Revised Statute 425.365 authorizes the Administrator of the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services to adopt such regulations as are necessary with respect to the Child Support Enforcement Program.

Ms. Murray invited public comment in north.

Deandrea Ceccarelli opposed the amendment, stating, "While I respect the intent of its design it punishes custodial parents both financially and emotionally. It is absolutely unfair to grant a waiver of financial obligation to a person because of their choice to commit a crime. As I read it, this amendment states the statistics about the likelihood of repayment and hardship placed on the criminal upon their release. What about the hardship of custodial parents who must now assume the full responsibility with no retribution? What about the countless hours and second

jobs custodial parents will now have to take all while knowing that the non-custodial parent is not being held responsible for their share. Why is it okay for them to be held responsible in a criminal court but not a family court? The answer is it's not fair, and it's not right."

Ms. Ceccarelli further explained, "just this morning I was on the phone with my case manager who informed me that the judge would likely drop the non-custodial parents payment to zero dollars while incarcerated. This was after he sent a letter asking if he wanted the case reviewed. For the last 2 years, almost no efforts have been made to enforce payments, nor a penalty given for non-payment, and now, those I trusted to enforce child support sent a letter to him asking him if he wanted a review hearing, knowing that his intention was to reduce his financial responsibility. I was mind blown to hear this and obviously upset. My daughter is almost 12 years old and by the time her non-custodial parent is due to be released, she will be 17. This means that for 5 years I will be required to take on the full burden of her care and financial support and he will be given a financial break. How is it fair that I do my part in raising a child I brought into this world and I am penalized for it and he commits a crime and is rewarded with having no financial responsibility, all while he receives free housing and meals. Again, at the expense of my tax dollars."

Ms. Ceccarelli concluded by stating that "while I believe that zero financial responsibility is unfair to custodial parents, I also believe that consideration of the intent of this amendment must also include consideration for the hardships this will place on custodial parents. A lower financial responsibility is completely unacceptable. I understand that while being incarcerated, a non-custodial parent is not able to make payments. But that does not mean they should not still be held responsible. That is like saying that if I quit my job, I shouldn't be responsible for my bills. As a parent and a custodial parent I have done my part and I am asking you today to do your part and not approve this amendment, as it only penalizes custodial parents, by giving a free ride to criminals."

Ms. Murray asked if there were other comments in the north.  
There were none.

Hearing no further comment, the amendment was adopted on behalf of the Administrator of Welfare and Supportive Services and the Director of Health and Human Services.

The meeting concluded at 2:20 pm.