

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to suits affecting the parent-child relationship and the calculation and enforcement of child support.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 8, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 8.062 to read as follows:

Sec. 8.062. PLACE OF PAYMENT. If an obligor is ordered to pay an obligee maintenance under this chapter and child support under Chapter 154, the court shall order the payment of maintenance to the state disbursement unit as provided by Chapter 234.

SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 154, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 154.0655 to read as follows:

Sec. 154.0655. IMPUTATION OF INCOME. (a) In this section, "resources" has the meaning assigned by Section 154.062(b).

(b) To the extent possible, the court shall rely on evidence of a party's resources when applying the support guidelines.

(c) In the absence of evidence of a party's resources, the court, when applying Section 154.066 or 154.068, shall consider relevant background circumstances regarding the obligor, including:

(1) the obligor's:

(A) assets;

(B) residence;

(C) employment;

- 1                    (D) earnings history;
- 2                    (E) job skills;
- 3                    (F) educational attainment;
- 4                    (G) literacy;
- 5                    (H) age;
- 6                    (I) health;
- 7                    (J) criminal history;
- 8                    (K) barriers to employment; and
- 9                    (L) record of seeking work;
- 10                  (2) job opportunities in the obligor's community;
- 11                  (3) the prevailing wage in the obligor's community;
- 12 and
- 13                  (4) whether there are employers willing to hire the
- 14 obligor.

15                  SECTION 3. Section 154.066, Family Code, is amended by  
16 adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

17                  (c) The court may not consider incarceration as intentional  
18 unemployment or underemployment when establishing or modifying a  
19 support order.

20                  SECTION 4. Section 154.125, Family Code, is amended to read  
21 as follows:

22                  Sec. 154.125. APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES TO NET RESOURCES.

23 (a) The guidelines for the support of a child in this section are  
24 specifically designed to apply to situations in which the obligor's  
25 monthly net resources are not greater than the maximum amount of net  
26 resources to which the statutory guidelines are applicable, as most  
27 recently published by the Title IV-D agency in the Texas Register

1 ~~[\$7,500 or the adjusted amount determined under Subsection (a-1),~~  
2 ~~whichever is greater].~~

3 (a-1) The [~~dollar~~] amount prescribed by Subsection (a) is  
4 adjusted every six years as necessary to reflect inflation. The  
5 Title IV-D agency shall compute the adjusted amount, to take effect  
6 beginning September 1 of the year of the adjustment, based on the  
7 percentage change in the consumer price index during the 72-month  
8 period preceding March 1 of the year of the adjustment, as rounded  
9 to the nearest \$50 increment. The Title IV-D agency shall publish  
10 the adjusted amount in the Texas Register before September 1 of the  
11 year in which the adjustment takes effect. For purposes of this  
12 subsection, "consumer price index" has the meaning assigned by  
13 Section 341.201, Finance Code.

14 (b) If the obligor's monthly net resources are not greater  
15 than the amount described [~~provided~~] by Subsection (a) and the  
16 obligor's monthly net resources are equal to or greater than the  
17 amount described by Subsection (c), the court shall presumptively  
18 apply the following schedule in rendering the child support order:

19 CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES

20 BASED ON THE MONTHLY NET RESOURCES OF THE OBLIGOR

21	1 child	20% of Obligor's Net Resources
22	2 children	25% of Obligor's Net Resources
23	3 children	30% of Obligor's Net Resources
24	4 children	35% of Obligor's Net Resources
25	5 children	40% of Obligor's Net Resources
26	6+ children	Not less than the amount for 5 children

27 (c) If the obligor's monthly net resources are less than

1 \$1,000, the court shall presumptively apply the following schedule  
 2 in rendering the child support order:

3 LOW-INCOME CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES

4 BASED ON THE MONTHLY NET RESOURCES OF THE OBLIGOR

5	<u>1 child</u>	<u>15% of Obligor's Net Resources</u>
6	<u>2 children</u>	<u>20% of Obligor's Net Resources</u>
7	<u>3 children</u>	<u>25% of Obligor's Net Resources</u>
8	<u>4 children</u>	<u>30% of Obligor's Net Resources</u>
9	<u>5 children</u>	<u>35% of Obligor's Net Resources</u>
10	<u>6+ children</u>	<u>Not less than the amount for 5 children</u>

11 SECTION 5. Section 154.129, Family Code, is amended to read  
 12 as follows:

13 Sec. 154.129. ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF COMPUTING SUPPORT FOR  
 14 CHILDREN IN MORE THAN ONE HOUSEHOLD. (a) If the obligor's monthly  
 15 net resources are not greater than the amount described by Section  
 16 154.125(a) and if the obligor's monthly net resources are equal to  
 17 or greater than the amount described by Section 154.125(c), in [In]  
 18 lieu of performing the computation under the preceding section, the  
 19 court may determine the child support amount for the children  
 20 before the court by applying the percentages in the table below to  
 21 the obligor's net resources:

22 MULTIPLE FAMILY ADJUSTED GUIDELINES

23 (% OF NET RESOURCES)

24		<u>Number of children before the court</u>							
25			<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
26	Number of	0	20.00	25.00	30.00	35.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
27	other	1	17.50	22.50	27.38	32.20	37.33	37.71	38.00

1	children for	2	16.00	20.63	25.20	30.33	35.43	36.00	36.44
2	whom the	3	14.75	19.00	24.00	29.00	34.00	34.67	35.20
3	obligor	4	13.60	18.33	23.14	28.00	32.89	33.60	34.18
4	has a	5	13.33	17.86	22.50	27.22	32.00	32.73	33.33
5	duty of	6	13.14	17.50	22.00	26.60	31.27	32.00	32.62
6	support	7	13.00	17.22	21.60	26.09	30.67	31.38	32.00

7        (b) If the obligor's monthly net resources are less than the  
 8 amount described by Section 154.125(c), in lieu of performing the  
 9 computation under the preceding section, the court may determine  
 10 the child support amount for the children before the court by  
 11 applying the percentages in the table below to the obligor's net  
 12 resources:

13                    LOW-INCOME MULTIPLE FAMILY ADJUSTED GUIDELINES

14                                    (% OF NET RESOURCES)

		<u>Number of children before the court</u>							
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	
17	<u>Number of</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>15.00</u>	<u>20.00</u>	<u>25.00</u>	<u>30.00</u>	<u>35.00</u>	<u>35.00</u>	<u>35.00</u>
18	<u>other</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>13.50</u>	<u>18.33</u>	<u>23.13</u>	<u>27.90</u>	<u>32.96</u>	<u>33.25</u>	<u>33.47</u>
19	<u>children for</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>12.50</u>	<u>17.00</u>	<u>21.50</u>	<u>26.50</u>	<u>31.50</u>	<u>31.94</u>	<u>32.28</u>
20	<u>whom the</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>11.63</u>	<u>15.80</u>	<u>20.63</u>	<u>25.50</u>	<u>30.41</u>	<u>30.92</u>	<u>31.33</u>
21	<u>obligor</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10.80</u>	<u>15.33</u>	<u>20.00</u>	<u>24.75</u>	<u>29.56</u>	<u>30.10</u>	<u>30.55</u>
22	<u>has a</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>10.63</u>	<u>15.00</u>	<u>19.53</u>	<u>24.17</u>	<u>28.88</u>	<u>29.43</u>	<u>29.90</u>
23	<u>duty of</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10.50</u>	<u>14.75</u>	<u>19.17</u>	<u>23.70</u>	<u>28.32</u>	<u>28.88</u>	<u>29.35</u>
24	<u>support</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10.41</u>	<u>14.56</u>	<u>18.88</u>	<u>23.32</u>	<u>27.85</u>	<u>28.40</u>	<u>28.88</u>

25            SECTION 6. Section 156.401, Family Code, is amended by  
 26 adding Subsection (c-1) to read as follows:

27            (c-1) Incarceration of a child support obligor in a local,

1 state, or federal jail or prison for a period exceeding 180 days is  
2 a material and substantial change of circumstances for the purposes  
3 of this section.

4 SECTION 7. Section 157.005(b), Family Code, is amended to  
5 read as follows:

6 (b) The court retains jurisdiction to confirm the total  
7 amount of child support, medical support, and dental support  
8 arrearages and render [~~a~~] cumulative money judgments [~~judgment~~] for  
9 past-due child support, medical support, and dental support, as  
10 provided by Section 157.263, if a motion for enforcement requesting  
11 a [~~cumulative~~] money judgment is filed not later than the 10th  
12 anniversary after the date:

- 13 (1) the child becomes an adult; or  
14 (2) on which the child support obligation terminates  
15 under the child support order or by operation of law.

16 SECTION 8. Section 157.263, Family Code, is amended by  
17 amending Subsections (a), (b), and (b-1) and adding Subsections  
18 (b-2) and (b-3) to read as follows:

19 (a) If a motion for enforcement of child support requests a  
20 money judgment for arrearages, the court shall confirm the amount  
21 of arrearages and render [~~one~~] cumulative money judgments as  
22 follows:

23 (1) a cumulative money judgment for the amount of  
24 child support owed under Subsection (b);

25 (2) a cumulative money judgment for the amount of  
26 medical support owed under Subsection (b-1); and

27 (3) a cumulative money judgment for the amount of

1 dental support owed under Subsection (b-2) [~~judgment~~].

2 (b) A cumulative money judgment for the amount of child  
3 support owed includes:

4 (1) unpaid child support not previously confirmed;

5 (2) the balance owed on previously confirmed child  
6 support arrearages or lump sum or retroactive child support  
7 judgments;

8 (3) interest on the child support arrearages; and

9 (4) a statement that it is a cumulative judgment for  
10 the amount of child support owed.

11 (b-1) A cumulative money judgment for the amount of medical  
12 support owed includes:

13 (1) unpaid medical support not previously confirmed;

14 (2) the balance owed on previously confirmed medical  
15 support arrearages or lump sum or retroactive medical support  
16 judgments;

17 (3) interest on the medical support arrearages; and

18 (4) a statement that it is a cumulative judgment for  
19 the amount of medical support owed.

20 (b-2) A cumulative money judgment for the amount of dental  
21 support owed includes:

22 (1) unpaid dental support not previously confirmed;

23 (2) the balance owed on previously confirmed dental  
24 support arrearages or lump sum or retroactive dental support  
25 judgments;

26 (3) interest on the dental support arrearages; and

27 (4) a statement that it is a cumulative judgment for

1 the amount of dental support owed.

2       **(b-3)** In rendering a money judgment under this section, the  
3 court may not reduce or modify the amount of child support, medical  
4 support, or dental support arrearages but, in confirming the amount  
5 of arrearages, may allow a counterclaim or offset as provided by  
6 this title.

7       SECTION 9. Section 159.605(b), Family Code, is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9       (b) A notice must inform the nonregistering party:

10           (1) that a registered order is enforceable as of the  
11 date of registration in the same manner as an order issued by a  
12 tribunal of this state;

13           (2) that a hearing to contest the validity or  
14 enforcement of the registered order must be requested within 30  
15 [~~20~~] days after notice unless the registered order is under Section  
16 159.707;

17           (3) that failure to contest the validity or  
18 enforcement of the registered order in a timely manner will result  
19 in confirmation of the order and enforcement of the order and the  
20 alleged arrearages; and

21           (4) of the amount of any alleged arrearages.

22       SECTION 10. Section 234.007(a), Family Code, is amended to  
23 read as follows:

24       (a) A court that orders a party to pay [~~income to be withheld~~  
25 ~~for~~] child support under a temporary or final order shall order that  
26 all [~~income ordered withheld for~~] child support payments [~~shall~~]  
27 paid through [~~to~~] the state disbursement unit, including any child



1 support that the court orders an employer to withhold from the  
2 income of the obligor.

3 SECTION 11. Section 240.009, Property Code, is amended by  
4 adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

5 (e) A disclaimer of an interest in property made by an  
6 individual must contain a sworn statement regarding whether the  
7 disclaimant is a child support obligor whose disclaimer is barred  
8 under Section 240.151(g).

9 SECTION 12. The enactment of this Act does not constitute a  
10 material and substantial change of circumstances sufficient to  
11 warrant modification of a court order or portion of a decree that  
12 provides for the support of a child rendered before the effective  
13 date of this Act.

14 SECTION 13. (a) Section 8.062, Family Code, as added by this  
15 Act, applies only to a maintenance order rendered on or after the  
16 effective date of this Act. A maintenance order rendered before the  
17 effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the  
18 date the order was rendered, and the former law is continued in  
19 effect for that purpose.

20 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a) of this section, an  
21 obligor subject to a maintenance order rendered before the  
22 effective date of this Act may choose to remit maintenance payments  
23 to the state disbursement unit as provided by Chapter 234, Family  
24 Code, and the state disbursement unit shall accept those payments.

25 SECTION 14. Section 154.0655, Family Code, as added by this  
26 Act, and Section 154.066, Family Code, as amended by this Act, apply  
27 only to a proceeding to establish or modify a child support

1 obligation that is pending in a trial court on or filed on or after  
2 the effective date of this Act.

3 SECTION 15. The changes in law made by this Act to Sections  
4 154.125 and 154.129, Family Code, apply to a suit affecting the  
5 parent-child relationship that is filed on or after the effective  
6 date of this Act. A suit filed before the effective date of this Act  
7 is governed by the law in effect on the date that the suit is filed,  
8 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

9 SECTION 16. Section 156.401, Family Code, as amended by  
10 this Act, applies only to a suit for modification of a child support  
11 order that is filed on or after the effective date of this Act. A  
12 suit for modification that is filed before the effective date of  
13 this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the suit was  
14 filed, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

15 SECTION 17. Section 157.263, Family Code, as amended by  
16 this Act, applies only to a cumulative money judgment rendered on or  
17 after the effective date of this Act. A judgment rendered before  
18 the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect at  
19 the time the judgment was rendered, and the former law is continued  
20 in effect for that purpose.

21 SECTION 18. Section 159.605, Family Code, as amended by  
22 this Act, applies only to a support order or income-withholding  
23 order issued by a court of another state that is registered in this  
24 state on or after the effective date of this Act. A support order or  
25 income-withholding order that is registered in this state before  
26 the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on  
27 the date the order was registered, and the former law is continued

1 in effect for that purpose.

2           SECTION 19. Section 240.009, Property Code, as amended by  
3 this Act, applies only to a disclaimer made on or after the  
4 effective date of this Act. A disclaimer made before the effective  
5 date of this Act is governed by the law in effect at the time the  
6 disclaimer was made, and the former law is continued in effect for  
7 that purpose.

8           SECTION 20. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.