

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Juvenile Justice & Family Issues
For HB 2247

Compiled on: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 10:07 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: April 12, 2023 10:30 AM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Heidi Hiser
fightinghomelessness.org
Dallas, TX

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, My name is [your name], and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written.

In 2021, I had the opportunity to attend a documentary presentation by Emmy Award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive Producer Lisa Marshall, which highlighted the staggering facts surrounding child support debt and its impact on families and taxpayers. The documentary currently in production sheds light on the complex and overwhelming nature of the child support system, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who re-enter society with insurmountable debt and barriers to obtaining employment and housing.

Undeniably the moral obligation of child support is a very complex system. One that seems impossible for previously incarcerated people who reenter society with child support arrears debt and extreme barriers to overcome. It was unbelievable to hear the state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually.

As I have stated, child support is an essential moral obligation, but it is a system that needs to be reformed for this specific population. Other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have enacted legislation that suspends child support obligations while incarcerated and allows for a suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. The documentary research revealed that this approach has resulted in decreased state debt and more support dollars being received by families.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the passing of section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written and to explore alternative solutions that consider the challenges previously incarcerated parents faced in meeting their child support obligations.

Please consider following the 21 states currently suspending orders to zero while incarcerated over 180 days for men and women, including Oklahoma and Louisiana, our boarding states. I will continue to watch the success of this exact bill breezing through the state of Mississippi and eagerly waiting for the Governor to sign.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue."

Heidi Hiser

Jennifer Polk
Self
Dripping Springs, TX

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, My name is Jennifer Polk and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written. In 2021, I had the opportunity to attend a documentary presentation by Emmy Award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive Producer Lisa Marshall, which highlighted the staggering facts surrounding child support debt and its impact on families and taxpayers. The documentary currently in production sheds light on the complex and overwhelming nature of the child support system, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who re-enter society with insurmountable debt and barriers to obtaining employment and housing. Undeniably the moral obligation of child support is a very complex system. One that seems impossible for previously incarcerated people who reenter society with child support arrears debt and extreme barriers to overcome. It was unbelievable to hear the state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually. As I have stated, child support is an essential moral obligation, but it is a system that needs to be reformed for this specific population. Other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have enacted legislation that suspends child support obligations while incarcerated and allows for a suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. The documentary research revealed that this approach has resulted in decreased state debt and more support dollars being received by families. In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the passing of section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written and to explore alternative solutions that consider the challenges previously incarcerated parents faced in meeting their child support obligations. Please consider following the 21 states currently suspending orders to zero while incarcerated over 180 days for men and women, including Oklahoma and Louisiana, our boarding states. I will continue to watch the success of this exact bill breezing through the state of Mississippi and eagerly waiting for the Governor to sign. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue."

Sincerely,
Jennifer Polk

Lisa Montes, Mrs
Fighting Homelessness
Coppell, TX

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, My name is LISA MONTES, and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written. In 2021, I had the opportunity to attend a documentary presentation by Emmy Award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive Producer Lisa Marshall, which highlighted the staggering facts surrounding child support debt and its impact on families and taxpayers. The documentary currently in production sheds light on the complex and overwhelming nature of the child support system, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who re-enter society with insurmountable debt and barriers to obtaining employment and housing. Undeniably the moral obligation of child support is a very complex system. One that seems impossible for previously incarcerated people who reenter society with child support arrears debt and extreme barriers to overcome. It was unbelievable to hear the state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually. As I have stated, child support is an essential moral obligation, but it is a system that needs to be reformed for this specific population. Other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have enacted legislation that suspends child support obligations while incarcerated and allows for a suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. The documentary research revealed that this approach has resulted in decreased state debt and more support dollars being received by families. In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the passing of section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written and to explore alternative solutions that consider the challenges previously incarcerated parents faced in meeting their child support obligations. Please consider following the 21 states currently suspending orders to zero while incarcerated over 180 days for men and women, including Oklahoma and Louisiana, our boarding states. I will continue to watch the success of this exact bill breezing through the state of Mississippi and eagerly waiting for the Governor to sign. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue."

Faith Spitz

Fighting Homelessness

Dallas, TX

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, My name is Faith Spitz and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written.

In 2021, I had the opportunity to attend a documentary presentation by Emmy Award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive Producer Lisa Marshall, which highlighted the staggering facts surrounding child support debt and its impact on families and taxpayers. The documentary currently in production sheds light on the complex and overwhelming nature of the child support system, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who re-enter society with insurmountable debt and barriers to obtaining employment and housing.

Undeniably the moral obligation of child support is a very complex system. One that seems impossible for previously incarcerated people who reenter society with child support arrears debt and extreme barriers to overcome. It was unbelievable to hear the state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually.

As I have stated, child support is an essential moral obligation, but it is a system that needs to be reformed for this specific population. Other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have enacted legislation that suspends child support obligations while incarcerated and allows for a suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. The documentary research revealed that this approach has resulted in decreased state debt and more support dollars being received by families.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the passing of section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written and to explore alternative solutions that consider the challenges previously incarcerated parents faced in meeting their child support obligations.

Please consider following the 21 states currently suspending orders to zero while incarcerated over 180 days for men and women, including Oklahoma and Louisiana, our boarding states. I will continue to watch the success of this exact bill breezing through the state of Mississippi and eagerly waiting for the Governor to sign.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue

Bruce Lyle, Dr
Aubrey Equine Clinic, PLLC
Aubrey, TX
HB2247

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, My name is Dr. Bruce Lyle and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written, on the recommendation of my friend and an expert on the homeless crisis in Dallas, Lisa Marshal.

While I must confess to being far from an authority on the homeless crisis, I agree with Mrs. Marshall that it makes no sense to further indebted an individual, or an individual's family, who is incarcerated with no ability to earn money while incarcerated. Her organization's stance that the debt burden and the state's collection process prohibit rehabilitated releasees from seeking housing and meaningful employment, while also costing taxpayers, appears to be well researched and justifiable. I would think that the current system was intended to discourage criminal activity in the first place, but it can be seen that it only makes a bad matter worse.

The other side of the coin I see is the lack of personal accountability, debt forgiveness or even a stay of responsibility of child support seems to overlook. The solution to this issue to me would be a pause on debt accumulation for incarceration beyond 180 days, as suggested, with the stipulation that a repeat incarceration carry with it an increased time of incarceration (double?), and renumeration for any previously forgiven orders, as well as ineligibility for further forgiveness of support obligations while incarcerated.

Thank you for your consideration. I applaud you and your colleagues for the work you do to keep Texas as the greatest state in the union. God bless you, God bless Texas, and God bless America.

Respectfully,

Bruce E Lyle, DVM

Jennifer Gates

Self

Dallas, TX

Hello my name is Jennifer Gates and I am writing to oppose section 12 in H.B 2247 as it is written. As a former representative of Dallas, City Council District 13, I have had the privilege of working with Lisa Marshall, CEO of Fighting Homelessness, who has been instrumental in shedding light on the outdated legislation that contributes to homelessness.

During my term, I assisted the city of Dallas in acquiring a hotel in my district to help decrease the chronically senior-aged homeless population. It was at this hotel where Lisa Marshall witnessed the burden that the child support system has had on poor mothers and fathers who were previously incarcerated.

In 2021 I attended a documentary presentation by Emmy award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive producer Lisa Marshall. The documentary currently in production depicts the issues surrounding the insurmountable child support debt and the burden it produces on mothers, children, and taxpayers. The facts presented in the documentary are staggering.

The state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually. It seems counter-intuitive to punish poor incarcerated parents with enforcement when they have not had the means to earn a wage to cover the order.

I understand that many other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have legislation suspending child support obligations while incarcerated. Many of them also allow a needed suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. Research has shown a decrease in state debt and more support dollars being received by families when a suspension is allowed while incarcerated and immediately following.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to consider amending section 12 of H.B 2247 to allow for a suspension of child support obligations while incarcerated and immediately following to ensure that parents have the opportunity to obtain employment, housing, and provide for their children based on their current earning ability.”

Sincerely,
Jennifer S Gates

Tara Storch
self
Coppell, TX

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues,

My name is Tara Storch, and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written.

In 2021, I had the opportunity to attend a documentary presentation by Emmy Award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive Producer Lisa Marshall, which highlighted the staggering facts surrounding child support debt and its impact on families and taxpayers. The documentary currently in production sheds light on the complex and overwhelming nature of the child support system, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who re-enter society with insurmountable debt and barriers to obtaining employment and housing.

Undeniably the moral obligation of child support is a very complex system. One that seems impossible for previously incarcerated people who reenter society with child support arrears debt and extreme barriers to overcome. It was unbelievable to hear the state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually.

As I have stated, child support is an essential moral obligation, but it is a system that needs to be reformed for this specific population. Other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have enacted legislation that suspends child support obligations while incarcerated and allows for a suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. The documentary research revealed that this approach has resulted in decreased state debt and more support dollars being received by families.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the passing of section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written and to explore alternative solutions that consider the challenges previously incarcerated parents faced in meeting their child support obligations.

Please consider following the 21 states currently suspending orders to zero while incarcerated over 180 days for men and women, including Oklahoma and Louisiana, our boarding states.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Rosie Stevens

Self

Coppell, TX

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, My name is Rosie Stevens, and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written.

In 2021, I had the opportunity to attend a documentary presentation by Emmy Award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive Producer Lisa Marshall, which highlighted the staggering facts surrounding child support debt and its impact on families and taxpayers. The documentary currently in production sheds light on the complex and overwhelming nature of the child support system, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who re-enter society with insurmountable debt and barriers to obtaining employment and housing.

Undeniably the moral obligation of child support is a very complex system. One that seems impossible for previously incarcerated people who reenter society with child support arrears debt and extreme barriers to overcome. It was unbelievable to hear the state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually.

As I have stated, child support is an essential moral obligation, but it is a system that needs to be reformed for this specific population. Other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have enacted legislation that suspends child support obligations while incarcerated and allows for a suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. The documentary research revealed that this approach has resulted in decreased state debt and more support dollars being received by families.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the passing of section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written and to explore alternative solutions that consider the challenges previously incarcerated parents faced in meeting their child support obligations.

Please consider following the 21 states currently suspending orders to zero while incarcerated over 180 days for men and women, including Oklahoma and Louisiana, our boarding states. I will continue to watch the success of this exact bill breezing through the state of Mississippi and eagerly waiting for the Governor to sign.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Richard Townsend

Self

Dallas, TX

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, My name is Ricky and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written.

In 2021, I had the opportunity to produce a documentary alongside Emmy Award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive Producer Lisa Marshall, which highlighted the staggering facts surrounding child support debt and its impact on families and taxpayers. The documentary currently in production sheds light on the complex and overwhelming nature of the child support system, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who re-enter society with insurmountable debt and barriers to obtaining employment and housing.

Undeniably the moral obligation of child support is a very complex system. One that seems impossible for previously incarcerated people who reenter society with child support arrears debt and extreme barriers to overcome. It was unbelievable to learn in my research for the project that the state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually.

As I have stated, child support is an essential moral obligation, but it is a system that needs to be reformed for this specific population.

Other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have enacted legislation that suspends child support obligations while incarcerated and allows for a suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. Our documentary research revealed that this approach has resulted in decreased state debt and more support dollars being received by families.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the passing of section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written and to explore alternative solutions that consider the challenges previously incarcerated parents faced in meeting their child support obligations.

Please consider following the 21 states currently suspending orders to zero while incarcerated over 180 days for men and women, including Oklahoma and Louisiana, our boarding states. I will continue to watch the success of this exact bill breezing through the state of Mississippi and eagerly waiting for the Governor to sign.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

dewayne ward

self

Fort Worth, TX

Section 231.016 This bill is essentially an Title IV-D agency immunity bill. Judges and the OAG are in league together to, as stated in each counties documents, to maximize title IV-D funds. Granting judges the ability to arbitrarily dismiss cases is a large imbalance of power.

Section 3 154.017 - the Social Security act already has this provision and provide services. The bill should be amended to also ask/require the custodial payment to become employed/find better employment in advance of the upcoming passage of the "Shared income model" bill that Dutton will be presenting. And this bill should also include a contempt section stating that if the obligor is abiding by the work advancement program, they cannot be held in contempt, ie jailed. *is 231.1015 (b)(1)

John O'Callahan

Fighting homelessness

Dallas, TX

I object vehemently to hb 2247 in the strongest terms. Barriers to successful integration by state prisoners are already too high.

Debi Sementelli
Self- Font Designer
CARROLLTON, TX

Chair State Rep Dutton, Vice Chair Rep. Jujan, and the committee members of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, My name is Debi Sementelli and I am writing in opposition to section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written.

In 2021, I had the opportunity to attend a documentary presentation by Emmy Award winner Thaddeus Matula and Executive Producer Lisa Marshall, which highlighted the staggering facts surrounding child support debt and its impact on families and taxpayers. The documentary currently in production sheds light on the complex and overwhelming nature of the child support system, particularly for previously incarcerated individuals who re-enter society with insurmountable debt and barriers to obtaining employment and housing.

Undeniably the moral obligation of child support is a very complex system. One that seems impossible for previously incarcerated people who reenter society with child support arrears debt and extreme barriers to overcome. It was unbelievable to hear the state of TEXAS has 18 billion dollars in child support debt, and 70% of those owing earn under \$10,000 annually. As I have stated, child support is an essential moral obligation, but it is a system that needs to be reformed for this specific population. Other states, including some of our southern neighboring Republican states, have enacted legislation that suspends child support obligations while incarcerated and allows for a suspension post-incarceration to obtain employment, housing, and a realistic child support order based on their current earning ability. The documentary research revealed that this approach has resulted in decreased state debt and more support dollars being received by families.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the passing of section 12 in H.B. 2247 as it is currently written and to explore alternative solutions that consider the challenges previously incarcerated parents faced in meeting their child support obligations. Please consider following the 21 states currently suspending orders to zero while incarcerated over 180 days for men and women, including Oklahoma and Louisiana, our boarding states. I will continue to watch the success of this exact bill breezing through the state of Mississippi and eagerly waiting for the Governor to sign.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Debi Sementelli
Carrollton, Texas