

1-1 By: Cook, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Johnson) H.B. No. 2524
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 8, 2025;
1-3 May 9, 2025, read first time and referred to Committee on
1-4 Jurisprudence; May 22, 2025, reported favorably by the following
1-5 vote: Yeas 4, Nays 0; May 22, 2025, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

1-7	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-8	X			
1-9	X			
1-10			X	
1-11	X			
1-12	X			

1-13 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-14 AN ACT

1-15 relating to the recovery of fees, court costs, and expenses in
1-16 family law proceedings.

1-17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-18 SECTION 1. Section 6.502(a), Family Code, is amended to
1-19 read as follows:

1-20 (a) While a suit for dissolution of a marriage is pending
1-21 and on the motion of a party or on the court's own motion after
1-22 notice and hearing, the court may render an appropriate order,
1-23 including the granting of a temporary injunction for the
1-24 preservation of the property and protection of the parties as
1-25 deemed necessary and equitable and including an order directed to
1-26 one or both parties:

1-27 (1) requiring a sworn inventory and appraisement of
1-28 the real and personal property owned or claimed by the parties and
1-29 specifying the form, manner, and substance of the inventory and
1-30 appraisal and list of debts and liabilities;

1-31 (2) requiring payments to be made for the support of
1-32 either spouse;

1-33 (3) requiring the production of books, papers,
1-34 documents, and tangible things by a party;

1-35 (4) ordering payment of reasonable and necessary
1-36 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses;

1-37 (5) appointing a receiver for the preservation and
1-38 protection of the property of the parties;

1-39 (6) awarding one spouse exclusive occupancy of the
1-40 residence during the pendency of the case;

1-41 (7) prohibiting the parties, or either party, from
1-42 spending funds beyond an amount the court determines to be for
1-43 reasonable and necessary living expenses;

1-44 (8) awarding one spouse exclusive control of a party's
1-45 usual business or occupation; or

1-46 (9) prohibiting an act described by Section 6.501(a).

1-47 SECTION 2. The heading to Section 6.708, Family Code, is
1-48 amended to read as follows:

1-49 Sec. 6.708. ~~[COSTS,]~~ ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND
1-50 EXPENSES.

1-51 SECTION 3. Section 6.708(c), Family Code, is amended to
1-52 read as follows:

1-53 (c) In a suit for dissolution of a marriage, the court may
1-54 award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and
1-55 expenses. The court may order the fees, costs, ~~[and]~~ expenses, and
1-56 any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who
1-57 may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means
1-58 available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

1-59 SECTION 4. Section 6.709(a), Family Code, is amended to
1-60 read as follows:

1-61 (a) In a suit for dissolution of a marriage, on the motion of

a party or on the court's own motion, after notice and hearing, the trial court may render a temporary order as considered equitable and necessary for the preservation of the property and for the protection of the parties during an appeal, including an order directed toward one or both parties:

- (1) requiring the support of either spouse;
- (2) requiring the payment of reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses;
- (3) appointing a receiver for the preservation and protection of the property of the parties;
- (4) awarding one spouse exclusive occupancy of the parties' residence pending the appeal;
- (5) enjoining a party from dissipating or transferring the property awarded to the other party in the trial court's property division; or
- (6) suspending the operation of all or part of the property division that is being appealed.

SECTION 5. Section 8.0591(b), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) An obligor may file a suit to recover overpaid maintenance under Subsection (a). If the court finds that the obligee failed to return overpaid maintenance under Subsection (a), the court shall order the obligee to pay the obligor's reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and all] court costs, and expenses in addition to the amount of the overpaid maintenance. For good cause shown, the court may waive the requirement that the obligee pay attorney's fees, [and] court costs, and expenses if the court states in its order the reasons supporting that finding.

SECTION 6. Subchapter B, Chapter 8, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 8.063 to read as follows:

Sec. 8.063. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES. In a proceeding under Section 8.056, 8.057, or 8.059, the court may award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by a party to the divorce or annulment. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 7. Section 8.206, Family Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (d) to read as follows:

(b) An employer who receives, but does not comply with, an order or writ of withholding is liable to:

- (1) the obligee for any amount of spousal maintenance not paid in compliance with the order or writ;
- (2) the obligor for any amount withheld from the obligor's disposable earnings, but not remitted to the obligee; and
- (3) the obligee or obligor for reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and] court costs, and expenses incurred in recovering an amount described by Subdivision (1) or (2).

(d) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest under Subsection (b)(3) to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 8. Section 8.208(c), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) An employer who intentionally discharges an employee in violation of this section is liable to that employee for current wages, other employment benefits, and reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and] court costs, and expenses incurred in enforcing the employee's rights. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 9. Section 8.357, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 8.357. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT [AND] COSTS, AND

EXPENSES. (a) In a proceeding under this subchapter, the court may order the obligor to pay reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by a party to obtain the order~~[, all court costs,]~~ and all fees charged by a plan administrator for the qualified domestic relations order or similar order.

(b) Fees, ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses ordered under this section may be enforced by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 10. Section 9.014, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 9.014. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES. The court may award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses in a proceeding under this subchapter. The court may order the attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order ~~[for fees]~~ in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 11. Section 9.106, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 9.106. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES. In a proceeding under this subchapter, the court may award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by a party to a divorce or annulment against the other party to the divorce or annulment. The court may order the attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order ~~[for fees]~~ in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 12. Section 9.205, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 9.205. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES. In a proceeding to divide property previously undivided in a decree of divorce or annulment as provided by this subchapter, the court may award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses. The court may order the attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 13. Section 41.002, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 41.002. LIMIT OF DAMAGES. Recovery for damage caused by wilful and malicious conduct is limited to actual damages, not to exceed \$25,000 per occurrence, plus reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses ~~[reasonable attorney's fees]~~.

SECTION 14. Section 41.0025(a), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Notwithstanding Section 41.002, recovery of damages by an inn or hotel for wilful and malicious conduct is limited to actual damages, not to exceed \$25,000 per occurrence, plus reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses ~~[reasonable attorney's fees]~~.

SECTION 15. Section 42.006(a), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Damages may include:

(1) reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court ~~[the actual]~~ costs, and expenses incurred~~[, including attorney's fees,]~~ in:

(A) locating a child who is the subject of the order;

(B) recovering possession of the child if the petitioner is entitled to possession; and

(C) enforcing the order and prosecuting the suit; and

(2) mental suffering and anguish incurred by the plaintiff because of a violation of the order.

SECTION 16. Section 42.009, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 42.009. FRIVOLOUS SUIT. A person sued for damages as

provided by this chapter is entitled to recover reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and] court costs, and expenses if:

(1) the claim for damages is dismissed or judgment is awarded to the defendant; and

(2) the court or jury finds that the claim for damages is frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation.

SECTION 17. The heading to Section 81.005, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 81.005. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

SECTION 18. Section 81.005(a), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The court may assess reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses against the party found to have committed family violence or a party against whom an agreed protective order is rendered under Section 85.005 as compensation for the services of a private or prosecuting attorney or an attorney employed by the Department of Family and Protective Services. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 19. Section 105.001(a), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) In a suit, the court may make a temporary order, including the modification of a prior temporary order, for the safety and welfare of the child, including an order:

(1) for the temporary conservatorship of the child;

(2) for the temporary support of the child;

(3) restraining a party from disturbing the peace of the child or another party;

(4) prohibiting a person from removing the child beyond a geographical area identified by the court; or

(5) for payment of reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses.

SECTION 20. Section 106.002, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 106.002. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES. (a) In a suit or motion under this title and in a habeas corpus proceeding, the court may render judgment for reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses and order the judgment and postjudgment interest to be paid directly to an attorney.

(b) A judgment for attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses may be enforced in the attorney's name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 21. Section 107.023, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 107.023. FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES IN SUITS OTHER THAN SUITS BY GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY. (a) In a suit other than a suit filed by a governmental entity requesting termination of the parent-child relationship or appointment of the entity as conservator of the child, in addition to the attorney's fees that may be awarded under Chapter 106, the following persons are entitled to reasonable and necessary fees, court costs, and expenses in an amount set by the court and ordered to be paid by one or more parties to the suit:

(1) an attorney appointed as an amicus attorney or as an attorney ad litem for the child; and

(2) a professional who holds a relevant professional license and who is appointed as guardian ad litem for the child, other than a volunteer advocate.

(b) The court shall:

(1) determine the fees, costs, and expenses of an amicus attorney, an attorney ad litem, or a guardian ad litem by reference to the reasonable and customary fees for similar services in the county of jurisdiction;

(2) order a reasonable cost deposit to be made at the time the court makes the appointment; and

(3) before the final hearing, order an additional

amount to be paid to the credit of a trust account for the use and benefit of the amicus attorney, attorney ad litem, or guardian ad litem.

(c) A court may not award ~~[costs,]~~ fees, costs, or expenses to an amicus attorney, attorney ad litem, or guardian ad litem against the state, a state agency, or a political subdivision of the state under this part.

(d) The court may determine that fees, costs, and expenses awarded under this subchapter to an amicus attorney, an attorney ad litem for the child, or a guardian ad litem for the child are necessities for the benefit of the child.

SECTION 22. Section 109.001(a), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) In a suit affecting the parent-child relationship, on the motion of any party or on the court's own motion and after notice and hearing, the court may make any order necessary to preserve and protect the safety and welfare of the child during the pendency of an appeal as the court may deem necessary and equitable. In addition to other matters, an order may:

(1) appoint temporary conservators for the child and provide for possession of the child;

(2) require the temporary support of the child by a party;

(3) enjoin a party from molesting or disturbing the peace of the child or another party;

(4) prohibit a person from removing the child beyond a geographical area identified by the court;

(5) require payment of reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses; or

(6) suspend the operation of the order or judgment that is being appealed.

SECTION 23. Section 152.208(c), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) If a court dismisses a petition or stays a proceeding because it declines to exercise its jurisdiction pursuant to Subsection (a), it shall assess against the party seeking to invoke its jurisdiction ~~[necessary and]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses including ~~[costs,]~~ communication expenses, ~~[attorney's fees,]~~ investigative fees, expenses for witnesses, travel expenses, and child care during the course of the proceedings, unless the party from whom fees are sought establishes that the assessment would be clearly inappropriate. The court may not assess fees, costs, or expenses against this state unless authorized by law other than this chapter.

SECTION 24. The heading to Section 152.312, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 152.312. ~~[COSTS,]~~ FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

SECTION 25. Section 152.312(a), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The court shall award the prevailing party, including a state, ~~[necessary and]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by or on behalf of the party, including ~~[costs,]~~ communication expenses, ~~[attorney's fees,]~~ investigative fees, expenses for witnesses, travel expenses, and child care during the course of the proceedings, unless the party from whom fees, costs, or expenses are sought establishes that the award would be clearly inappropriate. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 26. Section 154.012(b), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) An obligor may file a suit to recover a child support payment under Subsection (a). If the court finds that the obligee failed to return a child support payment under Subsection (a), the court shall order the obligee to pay to the obligor reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and all] court costs, and expenses in

addition to the amount of support paid after the date the child support order terminated. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt. For good cause shown, the court may waive the requirement that the obligee pay attorney's fees, court [and] costs, and expenses if the court states the reasons supporting that finding.

SECTION 27. Section 156.005, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 156.005. FRIVOLOUS FILING OF SUIT FOR MODIFICATION. Notwithstanding Rules 296 through 299, Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, if the court finds that a suit for modification is filed frivolously or is designed to harass a party, the court shall state that finding in the order and assess reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court [as] costs, and expenses against the offending party.

SECTION 28. Section 157.110(c), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) The court may order that all or part of the forfeited amount be applied to pay reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court [and] costs, and expenses incurred by the person or entity bringing the motion for contempt or motion for forfeiture.

SECTION 29. Section 157.162(b), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) A finding that the respondent is not in contempt does not preclude the court from awarding the petitioner court costs and reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses or ordering any other enforcement remedy, including rendering a money judgment, posting a bond or other security, or withholding income. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 30. Section 157.167, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 157.167. RESPONDENT TO PAY ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT [AND] COSTS, AND EXPENSES. (a) If the court finds that the respondent has failed to make child support payments, the court shall order the respondent to pay the movant's reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and all] court costs, and expenses in addition to the arrearages. Fees, [and] costs, and expenses ordered under this subsection may be enforced by any means available for the enforcement of child support, including contempt. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

(b) If the court finds that the respondent has failed to comply with the terms of an order providing for the possession of or access to a child, the court shall order the respondent to pay the movant's reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and all] court costs, and expenses in addition to any other remedy. If the court finds that the enforcement of the order with which the respondent failed to comply was necessary to ensure the child's physical or emotional health or welfare, the fees, [and] costs, and expenses ordered under this subsection may be enforced by any means available for the enforcement of child support, including contempt, but not including income withholding.

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), for good cause shown, the court may waive the requirement that the respondent pay reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and] costs, and expenses if the court states the reasons supporting that finding.

(d) If the court finds that the respondent is in contempt of court for failure or refusal to pay child support and that the respondent owes \$20,000 or more in child support arrearages, the court may not waive the requirement that the respondent pay reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and] costs, and expenses unless the court also finds that the respondent:

(1) is involuntarily unemployed or is disabled; and
 (2) lacks the financial resources to pay the attorney's fees, ~~and~~ costs, and expenses.

SECTION 31. Section [157.211](#), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 157.211. CONDITIONS OF COMMUNITY SUPERVISION. (a) If the court places the respondent on community supervision and suspends commitment, the terms and conditions of community supervision may include the requirement that the respondent:

(1) report to the community supervision officer as directed;

(2) permit the community supervision officer to visit the respondent at the respondent's home or elsewhere;

(3) obtain counseling on financial planning, budget management, conflict resolution, parenting skills, alcohol or drug abuse, or other matters causing the respondent to fail to obey the order;

(4) pay required child support and any child support arrearages;

(5) pay reasonable and necessary ~~attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses~~ ordered by the court;

(6) seek employment assistance services offered by the Texas Workforce Commission under Section [302.0035](#), Labor Code, if appropriate; and

(7) participate in mediation or other services to alleviate conditions that prevent the respondent from obeying the court's order.

(b) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest under Subsection (a)(5) to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 32. Section [157.268](#), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 157.268. APPLICATION OF CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT. Child support collected shall be applied in the following order of priority:

(1) current child support;

(2) non-delinquent child support owed;

(3) the principal amount of child support that has not been confirmed and reduced to money judgment;

(4) the principal amount of child support that has been confirmed and reduced to money judgment;

(5) interest on the principal amounts specified in Subdivisions (3) and (4); and

(6) the amount of any ordered reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court ~~or~~ costs, expenses, or Title IV-D service fees authorized under Section [231.103](#) for which the obligor is responsible.

SECTION 33. Section [157.318\(a\)](#), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) A lien is effective until all current support and child support arrearages, including ~~interest, any costs and~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, postjudgment interest, and any Title IV-D service fees authorized under Section [231.103](#) for which the obligor is responsible, have been paid or the lien is otherwise released as provided by this subchapter.

SECTION 34. Section [157.322\(a\)](#), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) On payment in full of the amount of child support due, together with any ~~costs and~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses, the child support lien claimant shall execute and deliver to the obligor or the obligor's attorney a release of the child support lien.

SECTION 35. Section [157.323](#), Family Code, is amended by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

(c) If arrearages are owed by the obligor, the court shall:

(1) render judgment against the obligor for the amount

due, plus ~~[costs and]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses;

(2) order any official authorized to levy execution to satisfy reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, and the lien~~[costs, and attorney's fees]~~ by selling any property on which a lien is established under this subchapter; or

(3) order an individual or organization in possession of nonexempt personal property or cash owned by the obligor to dispose of the property as the court may direct.

(e) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest under Subsection (c)(1) or (2) to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 36. Section 157.330(b), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) A claimant may recover ~~[costs and]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred in an action under this section. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 37. Section 157.507, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 157.507. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT ~~[AND]~~ COSTS, AND EXPENSES. (a) In a proceeding under this subchapter, the court may order the obligor to pay reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by a party to obtain the order~~[, all court costs,]~~ and all fees charged by a plan administrator for the qualified domestic relations order or similar order.

(b) Fees, ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses ordered under this section may be enforced by any means available for the enforcement of child support, including contempt.

SECTION 38. The heading to Section 158.0051, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 158.0051. ORDER FOR WITHHOLDING FOR ATTORNEY'S ~~[COSTS AND]~~ FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

SECTION 39. Sections 158.0051(a) and (c), Family Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) In addition to an order for income to be withheld for child support, including child support and child support arrearages, the court may render an order that income be withheld from the disposable earnings of the obligor to be applied towards the satisfaction of any ordered reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses resulting from an action to enforce child support under this title.

(c) The court shall order that amounts withheld for fees, ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses under this section be remitted directly to the person entitled to the ordered attorney's fees, ~~[or]~~ costs, or expenses or be paid through a local registry for disbursement to that person.

SECTION 40. Section 158.102, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 158.102. TIME LIMITATIONS. An order or writ for income withholding under this chapter may be issued until all current support and child support arrearages, interest, and any applicable fees and costs, including ordered reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, ~~[and]~~ court costs, and expenses, have been paid.

SECTION 41. Section 158.206, Family Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (d) to read as follows:

(b) An employer receiving an order or writ of withholding who does not comply with the order or writ is liable:

(1) to the obligee for the amount not paid in compliance with the order or writ, including the amount the obligor is required to pay for health insurance or dental insurance under Chapter 154;

(2) to the obligor for:
 (A) the amount withheld and not paid as required by the order or writ; and

(B) an amount equal to the interest that accrues under Section 157.265 on the amount withheld and not paid; and

(3) for reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, ~~and~~ court costs, and expenses.

(d) The court may order the fees, costs, and expenses under Subsection (b)(3) and any postjudgment interest under Subsection (b)(2)(B) to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 42. Section 158.209(c), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) If an employer intentionally discharges an employee in violation of this section, the employer continues to be liable to the employee for current wages and other benefits and for reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, ~~and~~ court costs, and expenses incurred in enforcing the employee's rights as provided in this section. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 43. Section 159.305, Family Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (g) to read as follows:

(b) A responding tribunal of this state, to the extent not prohibited by other law, may do one or more of the following:

(1) establish or enforce a support order, modify a child support order, determine the controlling child support order, or determine parentage of a child;

(2) order an obligor to comply with a support order, specifying the amount and the manner of compliance;

(3) order income withholding;

(4) determine the amount of any arrearages and specify a method of payment;

(5) enforce orders by civil or criminal contempt, or both;

(6) set aside property for satisfaction of the support order;

(7) place liens and order execution on the obligor's property;

(8) order an obligor to keep the tribunal informed of the obligor's current residential address, electronic mail address, telephone number, employer, address of employment, and telephone number at the place of employment;

(9) issue a bench warrant or capias for an obligor who has failed after proper notice to appear at a hearing ordered by the tribunal and enter the bench warrant or capias in any local and state computer systems for criminal warrants;

(10) order the obligor to seek appropriate employment by specified methods;

(11) award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, and other fees ~~and costs~~; and

(12) grant any other available remedy.

(g) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest under Subsection (b)(11) to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 44. The heading to Section 159.313, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 159.313. ~~[COSTS AND]~~ FEEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

SECTION 45. Sections 159.313(b) and (c), Family Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b) If an obligee prevails, a responding tribunal of this state may assess against an obligor ~~[filing fees,]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, filing fees, other costs, and necessary travel and other reasonable expenses

incurred by the obligee and the obligee's witnesses. The tribunal may not assess fees, costs, or expenses against the obligee or the support enforcement agency of either the initiating or responding state or foreign country, except as provided by other law. Attorney's fees may be taxed as costs, and may be ordered paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name. Payment of support owed to the obligee has priority over fees, costs, and expenses.

(c) The tribunal shall order the payment of ~~[costs and]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses if it determines that a hearing was requested primarily for delay. In a proceeding under Subchapter G, a hearing is presumed to have been requested primarily for delay if a registered support order is confirmed or enforced without change.

SECTION 46. The heading to Section 160.636, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 160.636. ORDER ADJUDICATING PARENTAGE; FEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

SECTION 47. Section 160.636(c), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (d), the court may assess ~~[filing fees,]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, filing fees, fees for genetic testing, other costs, and necessary travel and other reasonable expenses incurred in a proceeding under this subchapter. Attorney's fees awarded by the court may be paid directly to the attorney. An attorney who is awarded attorney's fees may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 48. Section 160.762(d), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(d) The court may assess ~~[filing fees,]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, filing fees, fees for genetic testing, other costs, and necessary travel and other reasonable expenses incurred in a proceeding under this section. Attorney's fees awarded by the court may be paid directly to the attorney. An attorney who is awarded attorney's fees may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 49. Section 231.006(f), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(f) If the certificate required under Subsection (d) is shown to be false, the vendor is liable to the state for reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, the costs necessary to complete the contract, including the cost of advertising and awarding a second contract, and any other damages provided by law or contract.

SECTION 50. Section 231.211, Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 231.211. AWARD OF ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES ~~[COST]~~ AGAINST NONPREVAILING PARTY IN TITLE IV-D CASE. (a) At the conclusion of a Title IV-D case, the court may assess reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, ~~[and all]~~ court costs, and expenses as authorized by law against the nonprevailing party, except that the court may not assess those amounts against the Title IV-D agency or a private attorney or political subdivision that has entered into a contract under this chapter or any party to whom the agency has provided services under this chapter. ~~[Such fees and costs may not exceed reasonable and necessary costs as determined by the court.]~~

(b) The clerk of the court may take any action necessary to collect any fees, ~~[or]~~ costs, or expenses assessed under this section.

SECTION 51. Section 231.303(c), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) A court may compel compliance with an administrative subpoena and with any administrative fine for failure to comply with the subpoena and may award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses to the Title IV-D agency in

enforcing an administrative subpoena on proof that an individual or organization failed without good cause to comply with the subpoena.

SECTION 52. Section 261.107(d), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(d) The court shall order a person who is convicted of an offense under Subsection (a) to pay any reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by the person who was falsely accused of abuse or neglect in any proceeding relating to the false report.

SECTION 53. Sections 261.108(b) and (c), Family Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b) A court shall award a defendant reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and other expenses related to the defense of a claim filed against the defendant for damages or other relief arising from reporting or assisting in the investigation of a report under this chapter or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from the report if:

(1) the court finds that the claim is frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation because the defendant is immune from liability under Section 261.106; and

(2) the claim is dismissed or judgment is rendered for the defendant.

(c) To recover under this section, the defendant must, at any time after the filing of a claim, file a written motion stating that:

(1) the claim is frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation because the defendant is immune from liability under Section 261.106; and

(2) the defendant requests the court to award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and other expenses related to the defense of the claim.

SECTION 54. Section 261.110, Family Code, is amended by amending Subsection (d) and adding Subsection (n) to read as follows:

(d) A plaintiff who prevails in a suit under this section may recover:

(1) actual damages, including damages for mental anguish even if an injury other than mental anguish is not shown;

(2) exemplary damages under Chapter 41, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, if the employer is a private employer; and

(3) ~~court costs, and~~

~~[(4)]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses.

(n) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest under Subsection (d)(3) to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

SECTION 55. Section 264.852(d), Family Code, is amended to read as follows:

(d) A permanency care assistance agreement may provide for reimbursement of the nonrecurring expenses a kinship provider incurs in obtaining permanent managing conservatorship of a foster child, including attorney's fees, ~~and~~ court costs, and expenses. The reimbursement of the nonrecurring expenses under this subsection may not exceed \$2,000.

SECTION 56. The change in law made by this Act applies to a suit that is filed on or after the effective date of this Act. A suit filed before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the suit was filed, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 57. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

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