
HOUSE BILL 1720

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Representatives Sheahan, Wolfe, Keiser, Mitchell, Smith, Clements,
Gombosky, Sullivan, Anderson, Tokuda and Carrell

Read first time 02/05/97. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1 AN ACT Relating to stepparents' financial responsibility; and
2 amending RCW 26.16.205 and 74.20A.020.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 26.16.205 and 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 s 13 are each amended
5 to read as follows:

6 The expenses of the family and the education of the children,
7 including stepchildren, are chargeable upon the property of both
8 husband and wife, or either of them, and they may be sued jointly or
9 separately. When a petition for dissolution of marriage or a petition
10 for legal separation is filed, the court may, upon motion of the
11 stepparent, terminate the obligation to support the stepchildren. The
12 obligation to support stepchildren shall cease upon termination of the
13 parent-child relationship by the stepparent or child, the entry of a
14 decree of dissolution, decree of legal separation, or death.

15 **Sec. 2.** RCW 74.20A.020 and 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 s 15 are each
16 amended to read as follows:

1 Unless a different meaning is plainly required by the context, the
2 following words and phrases as hereinafter used in this chapter and
3 chapter 74.20 RCW shall have the following meanings:

4 (1) "Department" means the state department of social and health
5 services.

6 (2) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of social and
7 health services, his designee or authorized representative.

8 (3) "Dependent child" means any person:

9 (a) Under the age of eighteen who is not self-supporting, married,
10 or a member of the armed forces of the United States; or

11 (b) Over the age of eighteen for whom a court order for support
12 exists.

13 (4) "Support obligation" means the obligation to provide for the
14 necessary care, support, and maintenance, including medical expenses,
15 of a dependent child or other person as required by statutes and the
16 common law of this or another state.

17 (5) "Superior court order" means any judgment, decree, or order of
18 the superior court of the state of Washington, or a court of comparable
19 jurisdiction of another state, establishing the existence of a support
20 obligation and ordering payment of a set or determinable amount of
21 support moneys to satisfy the support obligation. For purposes of RCW
22 74.20A.055, orders for support which were entered under the uniform
23 reciprocal enforcement of support act by a state where the responsible
24 parent no longer resides shall not preclude the department from
25 establishing an amount to be paid as current and future support.

26 (6) "Administrative order" means any determination, finding,
27 decree, or order for support pursuant to RCW 74.20A.055, or by an
28 agency of another state pursuant to a substantially similar
29 administrative process, establishing the existence of a support
30 obligation and ordering the payment of a set or determinable amount of
31 support moneys to satisfy the support obligation.

32 (7) "Responsible parent" means a natural parent, adoptive parent,
33 or stepparent of a dependent child or a person who has signed an
34 affidavit acknowledging paternity which has been filed with the state
35 office of vital statistics. If the parent-child relationship between
36 a stepparent and a child has been terminated by the stepparent or the
37 child, the stepparent is not a responsible parent.

38 (8) "Stepparent" means the present spouse of the person who is
39 either the mother, father, or adoptive parent of a dependent child, and

1 such status shall exist until terminated as provided for in RCW
2 26.16.205.

3 (9) "Support moneys" means any moneys or in-kind providings paid to
4 satisfy a support obligation whether denominated as child support,
5 spouse support, alimony, maintenance, or any other such moneys intended
6 to satisfy an obligation for support of any person or satisfaction in
7 whole or in part of arrears or delinquency on such an obligation.

8 (10) "Support debt" means any delinquent amount of support moneys
9 which is due, owing, and unpaid under a superior court order or an
10 administrative order, a debt for the payment of expenses for the
11 reasonable or necessary care, support, and maintenance, including
12 medical expenses, of a dependent child or other person for whom a
13 support obligation is owed; or a debt under RCW 74.20A.100 or
14 74.20A.270. Support debt also includes any accrued interest, fees, or
15 penalties charged on a support debt, and attorneys fees and other costs
16 of litigation awarded in an action to establish and enforce a support
17 obligation or debt.

18 (11) "State" means any state or political subdivision, territory,
19 or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the
20 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

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