

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6347

As of January 27, 2012

Title: An act relating to cost savings and efficiencies in mailing notices of possible license suspension for noncompliance with child support orders.

Brief Description: Regarding cost savings and efficiencies in mailing notices of possible license suspension for noncompliance with child support orders.

Sponsors: Senator Pridemore.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/27/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Staff: Shani Bauer (786-7468)

Background: As required by federal law, the Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS) has the authority to suspend or restrict the use of driver licenses, professional and occupational licenses, and recreational and sporting licenses of individuals owing past due child support. In 1997 the Legislature required all support orders to include a statement notifying the responsible parent that the privilege to obtain and maintain a license may not be renewed, or may be suspended, if the parent is not in compliance with a support order.

When a responsible parent is out of compliance with the support order, DSHS may serve notice upon the parent of its intent to submit the parent's name to the licensing entity for suspension of the parent's license. DSHS must attach a copy of the parent's child support order to the notice and the notice must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested. If certified mail is not successful, service must be by personal service. In order to avoid license suspension, the parent has 20 days from the date of the notice to contact DSHS to pay overdue amounts, enter into a payment agreement, request an adjudicative hearing, or move to modify the child support obligation.

Summary of Bill: If the support order establishing or modifying the support obligation includes a statement notifying the responsible parent that the ability to obtain or maintain a license may not be renewed or may be suspended if the parent is not in compliance with the support order, DSHS may send notice of intent to submit the parent's name to the licensing entity by first-class mail, addressed to the responsible parent's last know mailing address on

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file with DSHS. Notice by first-class mail is deemed served three days from the date the notice is deposited with the postal service. If the support order does not contain notice of potential license suspension, notice must still be served by certified mail, return receipt requested.

DSHS is no longer required to include a copy of the support order with the notice. DSHS must provide a copy of the support order to the responsible parent upon the parent's request.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The Legislature has asked employees to look for ideas for streamlining state government as some of the best ideas for reform come from state employees. This is one such idea; this won't balance the budget but will save some money by reducing the cost of giving notice in these cases. Parents are already well aware of these requirements and the possibility that their license may be suspended. This notice is redundant and costly. The bill will bring license suspension in line with other enforcement actions. License suspension is the only action that requires notice by certified mail. The tool of license suspension is used as a last resort. We are desperately trying to get the parent's attention to get them to work with DSHS when other approaches have not worked.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Pridemore, prime sponsor; Katie Nelson, WA Federation of State Employees.