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**SENATE BILL 6495**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Senators O'Ban, Darneille, and Pedersen; by request of Department of Social and Health Services

AN ACT Relating to notification requirements for the department of social and health services; and amending RCW 26.44.100, 43.20B.430, 43.20B.435, 43.20B.635, and 74.20A.320.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 26.44.100 and 2005 c 512 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The legislature finds parents and children often are not aware of their due process rights when agencies are investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect. The legislature reaffirms that all citizens, including parents, shall be afforded due process, that protection of children remains the priority of the legislature, and that this protection includes protecting the family unit from unnecessary disruption. To facilitate this goal, the legislature wishes to ensure that parents and children be advised in writing and orally, if feasible, of their basic rights and other specific information as set forth in this chapter, provided that nothing contained in this chapter shall cause any delay in protective custody action.

(2) The department shall notify the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child of any allegations of child abuse or neglect made against such person at the initial point of contact with such person, in a manner consistent with the laws maintaining the confidentiality of the persons making the complaints or allegations. Investigations of child abuse and neglect should be conducted in a manner that will not jeopardize the safety or protection of the child or the integrity of the investigation process.

Whenever the department completes an investigation of a child abuse or neglect report under this chapter ((~~26.44 RCW~~)), the department shall notify the subject of the report of the department's investigative findings. The notice shall also advise the subject of the report that:

(a) A written response to the report may be provided to the department and that such response will be filed in the record following receipt by the department;

(b) Information in the department's record may be considered in subsequent investigations or proceedings related to child protection or child custody;

(c) Founded reports of child abuse and neglect may be considered in determining whether the person is disqualified from being licensed to provide child care, employed by a licensed child care agency, or authorized by the department to care for children; and

(d) A subject named in a founded report of child abuse or neglect has the right to seek review of the finding as provided in this chapter.

(3) The founded finding notification required by this section shall be made by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the person's last known address.

(4) The unfounded finding notification required by this section must be made by regular mail to the person's last known address or by email.

(5) The duty of notification created by this section is subject to the ability of the department to ascertain the location of the person to be notified. The department shall exercise reasonable, good-faith efforts to ascertain the location of persons entitled to notification under this section.

((~~(5)~~)) (6) The department shall provide training to all department personnel who conduct investigations under this section that shall include, but is not limited to, training regarding the legal duties of the department from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment in order to protect children and families.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.20B.430 and 1989 c 175 s 99 are each amended to read as follows:

In all cases where a determination is made that the estate of a resident of a residential habilitation center is able to pay all or any portion of the charges, ((~~a~~)) an initial notice and finding of responsibility shall be served on the guardian of the resident's estate, or if no guardian has been appointed then to the resident, the resident's spouse, or other person acting in a representative capacity and having property in his or her possession belonging to a resident. The initial notice shall set forth the amount the department has determined that such estate is able to pay, not to exceed the charge as fixed in accordance with RCW 43.20B.420, and the responsibility for payment to the department shall commence twenty-eight days after ((~~personal~~)) service of such notice and finding of responsibility. Service of the initial notice shall be in the manner prescribed for the service of a summons in a civil action or may be served by certified mail, return receipt requested. The return receipt signed by addressee only is prima facie evidence of service. An application for an adjudicative proceeding from the determination of responsibility may be made to the secretary by the guardian of the resident's estate, or if no guardian has been appointed then by the resident, the resident's spouse, or other person acting in a representative capacity and having property in his or her possession belonging to a resident of a state school, within such twenty-eight day period. The application must be written and served on the secretary by registered or certified mail, or by personal service. If no application is filed, the notice and finding of responsibility shall become final. If an application is filed, the execution of notice and finding of responsibility shall be stayed pending the final adjudicative order. The hearing shall be conducted in a local department office or other location in Washington convenient to the appellant. The proceeding is governed by the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.20B.435 and 1979 c 141 s 240 are each amended to read as follows:

The secretary, upon application of the guardian of the estate of the resident, and after investigation, or upon investigation without application, may, if satisfied of the financial ability or inability of such person to make payments in accordance with the ((~~original~~)) initial finding of responsibility as provided for in RCW 43.20B.430, modify or vacate such ((~~original~~)) initial finding of responsibility, and enter a new finding of responsibility. The secretary's determination to modify or vacate findings of responsibility shall be served ((~~and~~)) by regular mail. A new finding of responsibility shall be appealable in the same manner and in accordance with the same procedure for appeals of ((~~original~~)) initial findings of responsibility.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.20B.635 and 1990 c 100 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) After service of a notice of debt for an overpayment as provided for in RCW 43.20B.630, stating the debt accrued, the secretary may issue to any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state, an order to withhold and deliver property of any kind including, but not restricted to, earnings which are due, owing, or belonging to the debtor, when the secretary has reason to believe that there is in the possession of such person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state property which is due, owing, or belonging to the debtor.

(2)(a) The order to withhold and deliver shall state the amount of the debt, and shall state in summary the terms of this section, RCW 6.27.150 and 6.27.160, chapters 6.13 and 6.15 RCW, 15 U.S.C. 1673, and other state or federal exemption laws applicable generally to debtors.

(b) The order to withhold and deliver shall be served ((~~in the manner prescribed for the service of a summons in a civil action or by certified mail, return receipt requested~~)) by regular mail or, with a party's agreement, electronically.

(3)(a) Any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state upon whom service has been made shall answer the order to withhold and deliver within twenty days, exclusive of the day of service, under oath and in writing, and shall make true answers to the matters inquired of therein.

(b) The secretary may require further and additional answers to be completed by the person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state.

(c) If any such person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state possesses any property which may be subject to the claim of the department of social and health services, such property shall be withheld immediately upon receipt of the order to withhold and deliver and shall, after the twenty-day period, upon demand, be delivered forthwith to the secretary.

(d) The secretary shall hold the property in trust for application on the indebtedness involved or for return, without interest, in accordance with final determination of liability or nonliability. In the alternative, there may be furnished to the secretary a good and sufficient bond, satisfactory to the secretary, conditioned upon final determination of liability.

(e) Where money is due and owing under any contract of employment, express or implied, or is held by any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state subject to withdrawal by the debtor, such money shall be delivered by remittance payable to the order of the secretary. Delivery to the secretary, subject to the exemptions under RCW 6.27.150 and 6.27.160, chapters 6.13 and 6.15 RCW, 15 U.S.C. 1673, and other state or federal law applicable generally to debtors, of the money or other property held or claimed satisfies the requirement of the order to withhold and deliver. Delivery to the secretary serves as full acquittance, and the state warrants and represents that it shall defend and hold harmless for such actions persons delivering money or property to the secretary pursuant to this chapter. The state also warrants and represents that it shall defend and hold harmless for such actions persons withholding money or property pursuant to this chapter.

(4)(a) The secretary shall also, on or before the date of service of the order to withhold and deliver, mail or cause to be mailed ((~~by certified mail~~)) a copy of the order to withhold and deliver to the debtor at the debtor's last known post office address((~~,~~)) or, ((~~in the alternative, a copy of the order to withhold and deliver shall be served on the debtor in the same manner as a summons in a civil action on or before the date of service of the order or within two days thereafter~~)) with a party's agreement serve the order upon the debtor electronically on or before the date of service of the order to withhold and deliver.

(b) The copy of the order shall be mailed or served together with a concise explanation of the right to petition for a hearing on any issue related to the collection. This requirement is not jurisdictional, but, if the copy is not mailed or served as provided in this section, or if any irregularity appears with respect to the mailing or service electronically, the superior court, on its discretion on motion of the debtor promptly made and supported by affidavit showing that the debtor has suffered substantial injury due to the failure to mail the copy or serve the copy electronically, may set aside the order to withhold and deliver and award to the debtor an amount equal to the damages resulting from the secretary's failure to serve on or mail to the debtor the copy.

**Sec.**  RCW 74.20A.320 and 2009 c 408 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department may serve upon a responsible parent a notice informing the responsible parent of the department's intent to submit the parent's name to the department of licensing and any appropriate licensing entity as a licensee who is not in compliance with a child support order. The department shall attach a copy of the responsible parent's child support order to the notice.

(a) If the support order establishing or modifying the child support obligation includes a statement required under RCW 26.23.050 that the responsible parent's privileges 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, the department may send the notice required by this section to the responsible parent by first-class mail, addressed to the responsible parent's last known mailing address on file with the department, postage prepaid, or by personal service. Notice by first-class mail is deemed served three days from the date the notice was deposited with the United States postal service.

(b) If the support order does not include a statement as required under RCW 26.23.050 that the responsible parent's privileges 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, service of the notice required by this section to the responsible parent must be by certified mail, return receipt requested. If service by certified mail is not successful, service shall be by personal service.

(2) The notice of noncompliance must include the following information:

(a) The address and telephone number of the department's division of child support office that issued the notice;

(b) That in order to prevent the department from certifying the parent's name to the department of licensing or any other licensing entity, the parent has twenty days from receipt of the notice to contact the department and:

(i) Pay the overdue support amount in full;

(ii) Request an adjudicative proceeding as provided in RCW 74.20A.322;

(iii) Agree to a payment schedule with the department as provided in RCW 74.20A.326; or

(iv) File an action to modify the child support order with the appropriate court or administrative forum, in which case the department will stay the certification process up to six months;

(c) That failure to contact the department within twenty days of receipt of the notice will result in certification of the responsible parent's name to the department of licensing and any other appropriate licensing entity for noncompliance with a child support order. Upon receipt of the notice:

(i) The licensing entity will suspend or not renew the parent's license and the department of licensing will suspend or not renew any driver's license that the parent holds until the parent provides the department of licensing and the licensing entity with a release from the department stating that the responsible parent is in compliance with the child support order;

(ii) The department of fish and wildlife will suspend a fishing license, hunting license, occupational licenses, such as a commercial fishing license, or any other license issued under chapter 77.32 RCW that the responsible parent may possess, and suspension of a license by the department of fish and wildlife may also affect the parent's ability to obtain permits, such as special hunting permits, issued by the department. Notice from the department of licensing that a responsible parent's driver's license has been suspended shall serve as notice of the suspension of a license issued under chapter 77.32 RCW;

(d) That suspension of a license will affect insurability if the responsible parent's insurance policy excludes coverage for acts occurring after the suspension of a license;

(e) If the responsible parent subsequently comes into compliance with the child support order, the department will promptly provide the parent and the appropriate licensing entities with a release stating that the parent is in compliance with the order.

(3) When a responsible parent who is served notice under subsection (1) of this section subsequently complies with the child support order, a copy of a release stating that the responsible parent is in compliance with the order shall be transmitted by the department to the appropriate licensing entities.

(4) The department of licensing and a licensing entity may renew, reinstate, or otherwise extend a license in accordance with the licensing entity's or the department of licensing's rules after the licensing entity or the department of licensing receives a copy of the release specified in subsection (3) of this section. The department of licensing and a licensing entity may waive any applicable requirement for reissuance, renewal, or other extension if it determines that the imposition of that requirement places an undue burden on the person and that waiver of the requirement is consistent with the public interest.

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