

**Fifty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 4, 2005**

HOUSE BILL NO. 1162
(Human Services Committee)
(At the request of the Department of Human Services)

AN ACT to create and enact a new section to chapter 12.1-32 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to restitution for nonpayment of child support; to amend and reenact sections 14-09-09.30 and 50-09-08.6 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to collection of child support arrears; and to provide a penalty.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. A new section to chapter 12.1-32 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Restitution to be required of certain offenders - Penalty. Notwithstanding any other provision in this chapter, whenever a person whose license has been suspended for nonpayment of child support under section 50-09-08.6 is convicted of engaging in activity for which the license was required, the court shall require as a condition of the sentence that the person pay restitution in the amount of two hundred fifty dollars, or a higher amount set by the court, as specified in subdivision e of subsection 4 of section 12.1-32-07. Any restitution ordered under this section must be paid to the state disbursement unit for distribution under section 14-09-25.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Section 14-09-09.30 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

14-09-09.30. Monthly amount due. ~~The total amount of child support due in each month is:~~

1. If there is a current monthly support obligation, the total amount of child support due in each month is the sum of the obligor's current monthly support obligation; and
 - a. The amount the obligor is ordered to pay toward any outstanding arrearage; or
 - b. If no order to repay an arrearage exists, an amount for application to any arrearage equal to twenty percent of the obligor's current monthly support obligation; or
2. If there is no current monthly support obligation, the total amount of child support due in each month is:
 - a. An amount equal to the greater of:
 - (1) The amount the obligor is ordered to pay toward any outstanding arrearage; or
 - (2) The sum of the obligor's most recent monthly support obligation and twenty percent of the obligor's most recent monthly support obligation;
 - b. An amount the obligor is ordered to pay toward an arrearage during periods when the supported child resides with the obligor pursuant to a court order; or
 - c. An amount the obligor is ordered to pay toward an arrearage if that amount is included in an order issued when there is no current monthly support obligation.
3. The total amount of child support due in each month under this section may be increased at the request of the obligor to repay an arrearage or by agreement with the public authority.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT. Section 50-09-08.6 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

50-09-08.6. Suspension of occupational, professional, recreational, motor vehicle operator, and vehicle licenses and registrations for nonpayment of child support or failure to obey subpoena.

1. As used in this section:
 - a. "License" means:
 - (1) Any certificate, permit, or license issued by an agency of the state or a political subdivision of the state which the obligor is required to obtain prior to engaging in the obligor's occupation or profession;
 - (2) Any certificate, permit, or license issued by ~~lottery or by tag~~ an agency of the state which the obligor is required to obtain prior to engaging in a recreational activity; and
 - (3) Any operator's license or vehicle license or registration which the obligor is required to obtain prior to operating or owning a vehicle in this state. As used in this section, "vehicle" includes any motor vehicle as defined in section 39-01-01, aircraft, snowmobile, motorboat, or personal watercraft.
 - b. "Licensee" means a person who has applied for or currently possesses a license.
 - c. "Licensing authority" means an agency of the state or a political subdivision of the state that issues a license, including occupational or professional boards, the game and fish department, and the department of transportation.
2. The state agency, directly or through agents and child support agencies, may withhold, restrict, or suspend one or more licenses issued to:
 - a. A person who has failed, after receiving proper notice, to comply with a subpoena relating to a paternity or child support matter;
 - b. An obligor who is in arrears in child support in an amount greater than three times the obligor's current or most recent monthly child support obligation or five thousand dollars, whichever is less; or
 - c. An obligor who is not in compliance with an existing payment plan that has been negotiated between the obligor and the state agency under this section.
3. Before withholding, restricting, or suspending a license under ~~this section~~ subdivision a or b of subsection 2, the state agency shall send a notice to the licensee by first-class mail to the licensee's last-known address stating that the licensee has thirty days after the date of the notice to comply with the subpoena, satisfy the arrearage in full, or negotiate a payment plan with the state agency under this section. The notice must further state that the licensee may contest the action of the state agency by making a written request for a court hearing ~~to the state agency~~ under subsection 5 within ten days of the date of the notice.
4. Upon notice to the licensee, the state agency may withhold, restrict, or suspend a license under subdivision c of subsection 2 at any time if the licensee fails to comply with a payment plan negotiated under this section. A copy of the state agency's order to withhold, restrict, or suspend a license must be sent to the licensee by first-class mail to the licensee's last-known address. The order must state that the licensee may contest the action of the state agency by making a written request for a court hearing under subsection 5 within ten days of the date of the order.

- ~~5.~~ 5. Upon a request for a hearing under this section, ~~the state agency shall petition~~ must be made to the court that issued or considered the child support order for an order authorizing the state agency to withhold, restrict, or suspend one or more licenses issued to the licensee. If a child support order was issued by a court or administrative tribunal in another jurisdiction, the ~~hearing request~~ may be held in made to any court of this state which has jurisdiction to enforce that order or, if no court of this state has jurisdiction to enforce that order, in any court of this state with jurisdiction over the licensee.
- ~~5.~~ 6. ~~The~~ In a contest under this section, the court ~~shall authorize~~ must affirm the action of the state agency to withhold, restrict, or suspend a license only if unless it finds that the licensee's delinquency or failure to comply with a subpoena, a child support order, or an existing payment plan was not willful. Upon a showing by the state agency that the licensee has failed to comply with a subpoena, owes arrears in an amount greater than three times the ~~obligor's~~ licensee's current or most recent monthly child support obligation or five thousand dollars, whichever is less, or is not in compliance with an existing payment plan between the ~~obligor~~ licensee and the state agency under this section, the licensee has the burden of proving that the delinquency or failure to comply was not willful.
- ~~6.~~ 7. The state agency shall notify the appropriate licensing authority that the state agency has withheld, restricted, or suspended a license under this section. A license that is withheld, restricted, or suspended by the state agency under this section may be reinstated only by the state agency after the licensee complies with the subpoena, satisfies the arrearage in full, or enters into a payment plan with the state agency under this section.
- ~~7.~~ 8. An obligor and the state agency may enter into a payment plan under which the obligor agrees to satisfy the obligor's total child support obligation, including arrears, within a period not to exceed ten years. A payment plan under this section must require the obligor to make an immediate payment to the state disbursement unit in an amount equal to five percent of the total arrears owed by the obligor or five hundred dollars, whichever is greater. The state agency may waive or reduce the immediate payment that is due under a payment plan if the obligor's current or most recent monthly support obligation is less than five hundred dollars. The state agency may require that a payment plan under this section include satisfaction of all court-ordered child support obligations of the obligor. The obligor's current or most recent monthly support obligation under section 14-09-09.30 must be considered when determining the duration of a payment plan under this section and the payments due under the agreement. A payment plan under this section is not a modification of any child support obligation of the obligor and does not bar judicial review of a child support order under section 14-09-08.4 or other enforcement actions by the obligee or the state agency.
- ~~8.~~ 9. An action of the state agency to withhold, restrict, or suspend a license under this section may not be appealed to the state agency or to the licensing authority, including an appeal under chapter 28-32. Section 50-09-14 does not apply to actions taken by the state agency under this section.
- ~~9.~~ 10. Except for statistical purposes, an entry on the driving record or abstract of a restriction or suspension under this section after the restriction or suspension ceases may not be available to the public other than by order of a court of competent jurisdiction.
- ~~10.~~ 11. A licensing authority and any person acting on its behalf is not liable for any actions taken to withhold, restrict, or suspend a license under this section. This section does not limit the ability of a licensing authority to withhold, restrict, or suspend a license on any other grounds authorized by law.

Speaker of the House

President of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

Secretary of the Senate

This certifies that the within bill originated in the House of Representatives of the Fifty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as House Bill No. 1162.

House Vote: Yeas 85 Nays 4 Absent 5

Senate Vote: Yeas 34 Nays 11 Absent 2

Chief Clerk of the House

Received by the Governor at _____ M. on _____, 2005.

Approved at _____ M. on _____, 2005.

Governor

Filed in this office this _____ day of _____, 2005,

at _____ o'clock _____ M.

Secretary of State