



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT:
MICHELLE MOWERY JOHNSON
(615) 313-4707 / OFFICE

STATE CRACKS DOWN ON PARENTS WHO DON'T SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN *LICENSES ON THE LINE FOR THOUSANDS OF TENNESSEANS*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— More than 15,000 parents who are not paying child support face losing their driver's, professional and/or recreational licenses if they don't pay up soon. Letters from the Department of Human Services warning delinquent parents are arriving in mailboxes across Tennessee. The notices inform parents that if they are behind at least \$500 in their child support and haven't made a payment in more than 90 days, they could lose their license(s).

"We are absolutely committed to making sure children in this state receive their court-ordered support," said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. "Having a child means taking responsibility for that child, and it is appalling that so many parents are walking out on that duty. License revocation is a wake-up call that works for thousands of parents who have been ordered, but are not paying their support."

There are more than 20,000 licenses currently at risk. Parents who face the loss of their driver's, professional or recreational licenses include registered nurses, real estate agents, security guards, and teachers. Revocation letters have been sent to non-paying mothers and fathers in every county in Tennessee, covering more than 4,500 cases in Shelby County, 2,250 in Davidson County, 1,350 in Knox County and 1,150 in Hamilton County.

State and federal law allows DHS, which administers the Child Support Program, to revoke the licenses of parents who fail to pay their child support. The notices inform parents that they can prevent revocation if they contact their local child support office and set up payment plans, or repay the past due amount. Traditionally, half of the parents who receive notices end up working with DHS to pay off their child support obligation. However, last year more than 7,000 licenses were revoked due to failure to pay.

This year, data matches between DHS and the Department of Safety identified more than 18,000 driver's licenses of persons meeting the requirements for revocation of their licenses. More than 400 professional licenses issued by the Departments of Commerce and Insurance, Health and Education are also at risk. Approximately 1,200 hunting and fishing licenses will also be subject to revocation.

In addition to the license revocation program, the Child Support division and its partners use enforcement tools such as administrative wage assignment or garnishment, liens and federal intercept programs to collect support. In recent months, DHS intercepted 41,000 federal economic stimulus checks, totaling more than \$24 million.

There are currently 260,000 child support cases under court order in Tennessee. Of these, roughly 55 percent pay their court ordered support in a timely manner.

For more information on the Child Support Program, visit the DHS website at:
http://state.tn.us/humanserv/cs/cs_main.htm

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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37248
615.313.4700