

Public Law 105-187  
105th Congress

An Act

June 24, 1998  
[H.R. 3811]

To establish felony violations for the failure to pay legal child support obligations, and for other purposes.

Deadbeat Parents  
Punishment Act  
of 1998.  
18 USC 228 note.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1998”.

**SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF FELONY VIOLATIONS.**

Section 228 of title 18, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

**“§ 228. Failure to pay legal child support obligations**

“(a) **OFFENSE.**—Any person who—

“(1) willfully fails to pay a support obligation with respect to a child who resides in another State, if such obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than 1 year, or is greater than \$5,000;

“(2) travels in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent to evade a support obligation, if such obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than 1 year, or is greater than \$5,000; or

“(3) willfully fails to pay a support obligation with respect to a child who resides in another State, if such obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than 2 years, or is greater than \$10,000;

shall be punished as provided in subsection (c).

“(b) **PRESUMPTION.**—The existence of a support obligation that was in effect for the time period charged in the indictment or information creates a rebuttable presumption that the obligor has the ability to pay the support obligation for that time period.

“(c) **PUNISHMENT.**—The punishment for an offense under this section is—

“(1) in the case of a first offense under subsection (a)(1), a fine under this title, imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both; and

“(2) in the case of an offense under paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a), or a second or subsequent offense under subsection (a)(1), a fine under this title, imprisonment for not more than 2 years, or both.

“(d) **MANDATORY RESTITUTION.**—Upon a conviction under this section, the court shall order restitution under section 3663A in

Courts.

an amount equal to the total unpaid support obligation as it exists at the time of sentencing.

“(e) VENUE.—With respect to an offense under this section, an action may be inquired of and prosecuted in a district court of the United States for—

“(1) the district in which the child who is the subject of the support obligation involved resided during a period during which a person described in subsection (a) (referred to in this subsection as an ‘obligor’) failed to meet that support obligation;

“(2) the district in which the obligor resided during a period described in paragraph (1); or

“(3) any other district with jurisdiction otherwise provided for by law.

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

“(1) the term ‘Indian tribe’ has the meaning given that term in section 102 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 479a);

“(2) the term ‘State’ includes any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States; and

“(3) the term ‘support obligation’ means any amount determined under a court order or an order of an administrative process pursuant to the law of a State or of an Indian tribe to be due from a person for the support and maintenance of a child or of a child and the parent with whom the child is living.”.

Approved June 24, 1998.

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**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 3811 (S. 1371):**

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 144 (1998):

May 12, considered and passed House.

June 5, considered and passed Senate.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 34 (1998):

June 24, Presidential remarks.