S. 1882

To expand child support enforcement through means other than programs financed at Federal expense.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 8, 1999

Mrs. Hutchison (for herself and Mr. Stevens) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To expand child support enforcement through means other than programs financed at Federal expense.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
- 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "Child Support Enforce-
- 5 ment Options Act of 1999".
- 6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.
- 7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—
- 8 (1) nearly 28 percent of the Nation's children
- 9 live in families headed by a single parent and these

- families are 5 times more likely to be poor than 2parent families;
- 3 (2) children make up 40 percent of the Nation's 4 poor population and 1 out of every 5 children in the 5 Nation live in poverty;
 - (3) the regular and full collection of child support from an absent parent can make a significant difference in the financial well-being of single-parent families, particularly families which have left the public welfare rolls;
 - (4) only 50 percent of the single-parent families which are owed child support receive the full amount due them during any year and 25 percent of such families received none of the support due them;
 - (5) because of their need for effective child support enforcement millions of families have turned to the Government child support program established in 1975 under part D of title IV of the Social Security Act (referred to in this Act as the "title IV–D program") causing the caseload of that program to increase over the past 20 years from just under 4,000,000 cases to well over 19,000,000;
 - (6) in fiscal year 1979 the collection rate in title IV-D program cases was 17.1 percent and in fiscal year 1996 the rate was 20.5 percent, rep-

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- resenting only a 3.4 percent increase over a 17-year period despite greatly improved enforcement resources and remedies;
 - (7) in fiscal year 1996 the title IV–D program collected nearly \$12,000,000,000 in child support, representing, only about 52 percent of all current support owed in title IV–D program cases that year and only about 8 percent of past-due support owed that year, leaving \$44,600,000,000 still uncollected in title IV–D program cases in fiscal year 1996;
 - (8) in fiscal year 1996 the operation of the title IV–D program cost the taxpayer \$3,100,000,000, of which \$2,000,000,000 is Federal funding;
 - (9) in fiscal year 1996 there were about 52,000 staff employed in the title IV–D program who are dedicated to their work but unable to keep up with the enforcement needs of the millions of families served by the program;
 - (10) millions of families needing child support services turn to private attorneys and local government agencies which not part of the title IV–D program, but these attorneys and non-title IV–D public agencies do not have access to all the enforcement tools Congress has provided to the title IV–D program;

- 1 (11) to the extent that enforcement tools now 2 available to only the title IV-D program are not also 3 available to private attorneys and non-title IV-D 4 public agencies, such tools are being underutilized 5 and non-title IV-D entities are limited in their abil-6 ity to contribute to the national child support en-7 forcement effort; and
 - (12) if private attorneys and non-title IV–D public agencies have access to the enforcement remedies and information now available to only title IV–D program agencies, they could significantly augment the resources of the title IV–D program without using any Federal taxpayer dollars.
 - (b) Purposes.—The purposes of this Act are to—
 - (1) allow resources outside the title IV–D program to more effectively fight the growing problem of nonsupport in this country, without any financial cost to the Federal taxpayer, by providing private attorneys and public non-title IV–D agencies controlled access to certain enforcement tools now limited in use to the title IV–D program; and
 - (2) provide families seeking child support enforcement services the benefit of a choice in the use of available resources, thereby enabling more American families to receive the child support which they

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1	are owed and need for their financial self-sufficiency
2	without being forced to turn to the already overbur-
3	dened, taxpayer-funded title IV-D program.
4	SEC. 3. EQUAL USE OF INCOME WITHHOLDING FOR UNEM-
5	PLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS.
6	(a) Disclosure of Wage Information to Per-
7	SONS OTHER THAN TITLE IV-D AGENCY.—Section
8	303(e)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 503(e)(1))
9	is amended—
10	(1) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ", or to
11	any other individual or person enforcing child sup-
12	port obligations," after "enforcement agency"; and
13	(2) in the second sentence—
14	(A) by striking "only"; and
15	(B) by inserting "and which are being en-
16	forced by an individual or person other than the
17	State or local child support enforcement agen-
18	cy" before the period.
19	(b) AUTHORITY TO WITHHOLD IN THE CASE OF
20	Non-Title IV-D Enforcement.—Section 303(e)(2)(A)
21	of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 503(e)(2)(A)) is
22	amended—
23	(1) in clause (i), by inserting "and the identity
24	and location of the agency, individual, or person en-

1 forcing the obligations, to the extent known" before 2 the comma; (2) in clause (ii), by inserting ", or the indi-3 vidual or person," after "agency"; 4 (3) in clause (iii)(III), by striking "462(e)" and 5 6 inserting "459(i)(5)"; (4) in clause (iv), by inserting "or individual or 7 8 person disclosed under clause (i)" before the period; 9 and (5) in the matter following clause (iv)— 10 11 (A) by inserting "or to the individual or 12 person disclosed under clause (i) through legal 13 process (as defined in section 459(i)(5))" after 14 "agency"; and (B) by striking "his" and inserting "the 15 individual's". 16 17 (c) Fees.—Section 303(e)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 503(e)(2)) is amended by adding at the 18 end the following: 19 "(D) The State agency charged with the administra-20 21 tion of the State law may require payment, not to exceed 22 \$5.00 per calendar month, for the administrative costs in-23 curred by the agency under this paragraph for any child support obligations enforced pursuant to subparagraph 25 (A) which are attributable to child support obligations that

1	are enforced by an individual or person other than a State
2	or local child support enforcement agency.".
3	SEC. 4. COMPREHENSIVE COORDINATION WITH OTHER EN-
4	FORCEMENT EFFORTS.
5	(a) Secretarial Responsibilities.—
6	(1) In General.—Section 452 of the Social
7	Security Act (42 U.S.C. 652) is amended by adding
8	at the end the following:
9	"(m) Coordination With Other Enforcement
10	ACTIVITIES.—
11	"(1) In general.—The Secretary shall seek
12	and promote, to the extent consistent with this part,
13	the enforcement of child support obligations through
14	activities conducted by a private attorney or a public
15	entity not providing services pursuant to a State
16	plan under this part in order to ensure the fullest
17	practicable utilization of available enforcement re-
18	sources not requiring Federal financial support.
19	"(2) Access to enforcement remedies and
20	RESOURCES.—The Secretary shall provide, to the
21	maximum extent feasible and for the sole purpose of
22	establishing paternity and establishing, modifying,
23	and enforcing support obligations, access to the fol-
24	lowing procedures, remedies, and information to a

State or local governmental enforcement agency not

providing enforcement services under a plan approved under this part and to any private attorney that is registered with the Secretary under this section, and without the requirement of an application for services pursuant to section 454(4)(A)(ii) and subject to such reasonable fees as the Secretary may prescribe:

- "(A) The collection of past-due child support from Federal income tax refunds pursuant to section 464, subject to such procedures governing the time, content, and form of requests for such collection as are established by the Secretary of the Treasury, and approved by the Secretary.
- "(B) The collection of overdue child support from State income tax refunds pursuant to section 466(a)(3).
- "(C) The denial, revocation, or limitation of passports for overdue child support pursuant to section 452(k).
- "(D) The reporting to consumer credit bureaus of noncustodial parents who are delinquent in the payment of child support and the amount of overdue support pursuant to section 466(a)(7).

1	"(E) Financial institution data matches
2	and the enforcement of past-due support pursu-
3	ant to section $466(a)(17)$.
4	"(F) In addition to all information author-

"(F) In addition to all information authorized to be disclosed to an authorized person under sections 453(a)(2) and 454(8), pertinent case information, including information comparisons under section 453(j), maintained in components of the Federal Parent Locator Service under section 453 and information reported by employers pursuant to section 453A(b), subject to section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to the confidentiality of Federal income tax returns and return information) and other Federal requirements applicable to the confidentiality of information and the protection of privacy rights, including section 454(26) of this title.

"(3) REGISTRATION WITH THE SECRETARY OF A PUBLIC ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OR A PRIVATE ATTORNEY.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, the Secretary shall develop a form and procedures, including the charging of a reasonable fee, for the registration of a private at-

1	torney or public child support enforcement
2	agency not providing services under this part.
3	The form established under this subparagraph
4	shall require—
5	"(i) the disclosure of the legal name
6	and address of the public agency or of the
7	law offices of the attorney or other entity
8	for which the attorney provides legal serv-
9	ices, that provides enforcement of child
10	support obligations;
11	"(ii) the length of time the public
12	agency or the attorney or the entity for
13	which the attorney provides legal services
14	in the enforcement of child support, has
15	provided such enforcement services;
16	"(iii) the nature of the child support
17	enforcement services provided by the public
18	agency or by the attorney or entity for
19	which the attorney provides legal services
20	in the enforcement of child support;
21	"(iv) the amount of fees and other
22	costs charged a client for such services and
23	a copy of the standard contract or other
24	agreement between the public agency or
25	the attorney or entity for which the attor-

1	ney provides legal services in the enforce-
2	ment of child support and an individual re-
3	ceiving child support enforcement services
4	from the public agency or attorney; and
5	"(v) evidence of any bond or other as-
6	surance of client funds security.
7	"(B) REGISTRATION NUMBERS.—Upon re-
8	ceiving a completed and sworn registration form
9	under this paragraph, the Secretary shall assign
10	a registration number to the registering agency
11	or attorney. The Secretary shall provide reg-
12	istration information, including the assigned
13	registration number for a public agency or pri-
14	vate attorney, to each State agency operating
15	an enforcement program under an approved
16	plan under this part and, upon request and
17	payment of a reasonable fee, to any other entity
18	or individual.
19	"(C) Update of registration informa-
20	TION.—If the information provided on a reg-
21	istration form by a public agency or private at-
22	torney changes, the registered agency or attor-

ney shall notify the Secretary of the new or

amended information not later than 90 days

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after the date of such change, subject to the revocation of the registration by the Secretary.

"(D) TERM OF REGISTRATION; RE-NEWAL.—A registration under this paragraph expires on the second anniversary of the date of issuance of the registration and must be renewed not later than 60 days after such expiration date by filing a new registration form with the Secretary.

"(4) Penalties.—

"(A) In GENERAL.—In addition to any other penalties provided under Federal or State law, with respect to any public agency or private attorney registered with the Secretary under this paragraph (3) that knowingly and intentionally or with gross negligence uses, for purposes other than establishing paternity, or establishing, modifying, or enforcing child support obligations, any enforcement remedies or information made available under this subsection to such agency or attorney, the Secretary may impose either or both of the following penalties:

"(i) An administrative fine not to exceed \$10,000.

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"(ii) The revocation of the agency's or the attorney's registration under paragraph (3), with appropriate notice to State enforcement agencies providing services under this part and, in the case of an attorney, to disciplinary bodies of the State in which the attorney is licensed to practice law.

> "(B) INVESTIGATION.—The Secretary shall develop procedures for the investigation of any allegation of inappropriate use of enforcement remedies or information provided a public entity or private attorney registered under paragraph (3). If the Secretary determines that an enforcement remedy or information provided to a registered entity or attorney has knowingly and intentionally or with gross negligence been used for purposes other than those authorized under this subsection, the Secretary may impose 1 or both of the penalties described in subparagraph (A). An entity or attorney against whom an allegation has been brought shall be afforded the opportunity to respond to such allegation and to produce any pertinent evidence in defense.

"(5) Nonliability for state title IV-D Programs.—Notwithstanding any other provisions of Federal or State law, any State program providing services under this part that, in accordance with procedures developed by the Secretary, provides information or enables the use of an enforcement remedy to a public agency or private attorney registered under paragraph (3) shall not be liable under any Federal or State law to any person.

"(6) Required reports.—

"(A) Report to secretary.—Each public agency or private attorney registered with the Secretary under paragraph (3) shall report to the Secretary on an annual basis data relating to the use of enforcement remedies and information made available to the agency or attorney under this subsection, including the number and type of enforcement actions taken, the results of such actions, and the amounts of any collections made and distributed.

"(B) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall include the data provided by registered agencies and attorneys under subparagraph (A) in the annual report of the Secretary under subsection (a)(10).

1 "(7) Monitoring by the secretary.—The 2 Secretary shall develop a procedure to monitor on a 3 regular basis the use of any enforcement procedures, 4 remedies, and information provided to a registered 5 entity or person under this subsection to ensure that 6 such procedures, remedies, and information are used 7 for the sole purpose of establishing paternity and es-8 tablishing, modifying, and enforcing support obliga-9 tions.

"(8) SAFEGUARDS ON USE OF INFORMATION AND ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES.—An agency or private attorney registered under paragraph (3) shall have in effect safeguards on access to, and the appropriate use of, any information or procedures provided to the agency or attorney under this subsection. Such safeguards shall include written policies, controls on access to information available through automated systems, and training of all personnel who may have access to the information or procedures authorized for use by the registered agency or private attorney.".

22 (b) DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES.—The Sec-23 retary, in consultation with representatives of public agen-24 cies and the private bar eligible for registration under sec-25 tion 452(m)(3) of the Social Security Act, as added by

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- 1 this Act, shall develop procedures for the implementation,
- 2 in a revenue neutral manner, of the provisions of this sec-
- 3 tion for the access of such registered agencies and individ-
- 4 uals to the enforcement remedies and resources identified
- 5 in this section. Not later than 9 months after the date
- 6 of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall report on
- 7 such procedures to the Committee on Ways and Means
- 8 of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on
- 9 Finance of the Senate.
- 10 (c) STATE OPTION.—In developing the procedures re-
- 11 quired under subsection (b), the Secretary shall provide
- 12 that, at the option of the State, a State program approved
- 13 under part D of title IV of the Social Security Act may
- 14 participate in a plan of cooperation under which the State
- 15 program enables a registered public agency or private at-
- 16 torney to have access to, and utilize the enforcement infor-
- 17 mation and remedies authorized under section 452(m), as
- 18 added by this Act. Any State program participating in a
- 19 plan of cooperation shall be entitled to such reasonable
- 20 fees from a registered agency or attorney as the Secretary
- 21 may determine to reimburse the State program for its par-
- 22 ticipation in the plan.
- 23 SEC. 5. CONFORMING AND TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.
- 24 (a) Control by Secretary of Information in
- 25 Federal Parent Locator Service.—

1	(1) Section 453(c)(1) of the Social Security Act
2	(42 U.S.C. 653(c)(1)) is amended by inserting "and
3	any agent or attorney of any public child support
4	enforcement agency not providing services under a
5	plan approved under this part or of a private attor-
6	ney registered with the Secretary under section
7	452(m)(3)" before the semicolon.
8	(2) Section 453(j) of such Act (42 U.S.C.
9	653(j)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
10	lowing:
11	"(6) Restrictions on disclosure of infor-
12	MATION COMPARISONS.—Except as provided in this
13	subsection and section 452(m)(2)(F), the Secretary
14	shall not disclose any information comparisons au-
15	thorized by this subsection.".
16	(b) Restrictions on Disclosure of New Hire
17	Information Comparisons.—Section 453A of the Social
18	Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653) is amended—
19	(1) in subsection (f)(2), by striking "provide the
20	agency" and inserting "provide only the agency";
21	and
22	(2) in subsection $(h)(1)$ —
23	(A) by striking "may disclose" and insert-
24	ing "may only disclose": and

1	(B) by inserting "or, upon payment of a
2	reasonable fee not to exceed actual administra-
3	tive costs, to any person or entity authorized to
4	receive such information under section
5	452(m)(3)" before the period.
6	(e) Collection of Past-Due Support From Tax
7	REFUNDS TO DELINQUENT OBLIGORS.—
8	(1) Off-set.—Section 464(a) of the Social Se-
9	curity Act (42 U.S.C. 664(a)) is amended—
10	(A) in paragraph (2)(A)—
11	(i) in the first sentence—
12	(I) by inserting "or from an en-
13	tity registered with the Secretary
14	under section 452(m)(3) regarding an
15	obligation for which such State agency
16	is not providing enforcement services"
17	after "454(4)(A)(ii)"; and
18	(II) by inserting "or such reg-
19	istered entity (as applicable)" after
20	"State agency"; and
21	(ii) in the second sentence—
22	(I) by inserting "or to the reg-
23	istered entity for distribution" after
24	"State agency": and

1	(II) by striking "State shall" and
2	inserting "State or registered entity
3	shall''; and
4	(B) in paragraph (3)—
5	(i) in subparagraph (A)—
6	(I) by inserting "agency or an
7	entity registered under section
8	452(m)(3)" after "State"; and
9	(II) by striking "the State's de-
10	termination" and inserting "the deter-
11	mination of the State agency or the
12	registered entity";
13	(ii) in subparagraph (B), by inserting
14	"agency or registered entity" after "State"
15	each place it appears;
16	(iii) in subparagraph (C), by adding
17	at the end the following flush sentence:
18	"A registered entity shall directly reimburse the Sec-
19	retary of the Treasury the amount of such payment
20	upon receiving notice from the Secretary of such
21	payment."; and
22	(iv) in subparagraph (D), by inserting
23	"agency or registered entity" after "State"
24	each place it appears.

1	(2) Notices of past-due support.—Section
2	464(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 664(b))
3	is amended—
4	(A) by inserting "agency" after "State"
5	each place it appears;
6	(B) by inserting "agencies" after "States"
7	each place it appears; and
8	(C) by adding at the end the following:
9	"(3) In the case of withholding requests from
10	entities registered under section 452(m)(3), the Sec-
11	retary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Sec-
12	retary of Health and Human Services, shall develop
13	procedures for receiving such requests, including the
14	manner in which withholding requests must be sub-
15	mitted, the necessary information that must be in-
16	cluded in or accompany such requests, and the min-
17	imum amount of past-due support to which the off-
18	set procedures may be applied.".
19	(3) STATE INCOME TAX OFF-SET.—Section
20	466(a)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
21	666(a)(3)) is amended—
22	(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph
23	(A)—

1	(i) by inserting "or an entity reg-
2	istered under section 452(m)(3)" after
3	"agency"; and
4	(ii) by inserting "or being enforced by
5	such entity" after "part"; and
6	(B) in subparagraph (C), by inserting "or
7	the registered entity" after "agency" each place
8	it appears.
9	(d) Reporting Arrearages to Credit Bu-
10	REAUS.—Section 466(7) of the Social Security Act (42
11	U.S.C. 666(7)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
12	lowing:
13	"(C) Reporting by state agency or
14	REGISTERED ENTITY.—The State agency ad-
15	ministering the State program under this part
16	or a child support enforcement entity registered
17	with the Secretary under section 452(m)(3)
18	may make a report under this paragraph, sub-
19	ject to safeguards under subparagraph (B).".
20	(e) Use of Passport Sanctions for Failure To
21	PROVIDE SUPPORT.—Section 452(k) of the Social Secu-
22	rity Act (42 U.S.C. 652(k)) is amended—
23	(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting "or by an en-
24	tity registered under section 452(m)(3)" after "sec-
25	tion 454(31)": and

- 1 (2) in paragraph (3), by inserting "or reg-2 istered entity" after "agency".
- 3 (f) Financial Institution Data Matches for
- 4 Support Enforcement.—Section 466(a)(17) of the So-
- 5 cial Security Act is amended by adding at the end the fol-
- 6 lowing:
- 7 "(E) REQUESTS OF REGISTERED ENTI-8 TIES.—The State agency shall, upon payment 9 of a fee to cover actual administrative costs and 10 in accordance with such procedures as the Sec-11 retary may establish, accept a request from an 12 agency or private attorney registered under sec-13 tion 452(m)(3) for a data match under this sec-14 tion with respect to a noncustodial parent sub-15 ject to an order not being enforced under this 16 part. A State agency accepting a request from 17 such registered agency or attorney shall not be 18 liable under any Federal or State law to any 19 person as a result of incomplete or inaccurate 20 information provided by the registered entity 21 making the request.".
- 22 (g) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS.—Section 454 of 23 the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 654) is amended—
- 24 (1) in paragraph (32), by striking "and" at the end;

- 1 (2) in paragraph (33), by striking the period at 2 the end and inserting a semicolon; and
 - (3) by inserting after paragraph (33) the following:
 - "(34) provide that the State agency cooperate with a public agency or private attorney registered with the Secretary under section 452(m) by providing to such agency or attorney upon request and subject to the privacy protections of paragraph (26) case information available to the State agency pursuant to its administrative authority under section 466(c)(1)(D) or otherwise available to the State agency from the records of the State case registry required under section 454A; and
 - "(35) provide that the State agency close a case in which enforcement services are being provided by an agency or attorney registered under section 453(m) upon notification by such registered agency or attorney, except that the State agency may not close a case in which support payments are collected for an individual with respect to whom an assignment under section 402(a)(26) of this title is effective.".
- (h) CLARIFICATION OF APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN
 STATUTORILY PRESCRIBED PROCEDURES FOR CHILD

SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT.—Section 466(a) of the Social 1 2 Security Act (42 U.S.C. 666(a)) is amended— 3 (1) in paragraph (4)(A), by inserting "without 4 regard to whether the support order is being en-5 forced pursuant to this part" before the semicolon; 6 and 7 (2) in paragraph (16), by inserting "without re-8 gard to whether services are being provided pursuant to this part" after "appropriate cases". 9 10 SEC. 3. EXPEDITIOUS PAYMENT OF SUPPORT COLLEC-11 TIONS. 12 PLAN (a) REQUIREMENTS.—Section STATE 13 454(11)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 654(11)(B)) is amended by inserting "at the address (in-14 15 cluding a financial institution for electronic transfer or direct deposit of funds) and in care of the individual or enti-16 ty last specified for receipt of such payment by any indi-17 vidual legally able to so specify" before the semicolon. 18 19 (b) STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS.—Section 466(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 666(a)) is amended 20 21 by inserting after paragraph (19) the following: 22 "(20) Payment of support collections.— 23 Procedures under which any payment of child sup-

port due a family which is received by an instrumen-

tality of or a political subdivision of the State, or by

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- 1 an entity acting under authority of such an instru-2 mentality or political subdivision, shall be paid on 3 behalf of the individual entitled to such support at the address (including a financial institution for 5 electronic transfer or direct deposit of funds) and in 6 care of the individual or entity last specified for re-7 ceipt of such payment by any individual legally able 8 to so specify, without regard to whether the child 9 support obligation is being enforced under a State 10 plan approved under this part and without the ne-11 cessity of obtaining an order from any judicial or ad-12 ministrative tribunal.".
- 13 (c) Conforming Amendment.—Section 454B of 14 the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 654B) is amended by 15 adding at the end the following:
- "(e) Redirection of Disbursements.—The State disbursement unit shall redirect and forward any portion of a support payment due a family to any address (including a financial institution for the electronic transfer or direct deposit of funds) and in care of any person or entity last specified for receipt of such payment by any individual legally able to so specify on behalf of the person entitled to such support."

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