

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE "CHILD SUPPORT FAIRNESS AND FEDERAL TAX REFUND INTERCEPTION ACT OF 2000"

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Child Support Fairness and Federal Tax Refund Interception Act of 2000." This legislation expands the eligibility of one of our most effective means of enforcing child support orders—intercepting the Federal tax refunds of parents delinquent in paying their court-ordered financial support for their children. Under current law, the Federal tax refund offset program operated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is limited to cases where the child is either a minor or a disabled adult.

It goes without saying that a parent who brings a child into this world is responsible for providing for that child's physical needs regardless of any conflict with the child's custodial parent. Last July, I received a letter from Lisa McCave of Wilmington, Delaware. She wanted to know where the justice was in the IRS allowing her husband to collect a \$2,426 tax refund when he still owed her nearly \$7,000 in back child support just because her son is no longer a minor and is not disabled.

Since her son was three, Ms. McCave has had to work two jobs to make up for child support installments that were never paid. She has spent the better part of her time away from work tracking down her former husband, who has often quit his job as soon as his wages were garnished to repay this debt. Now, she is trying to pay off \$55,000 in parent loans she incurred to send her son to college. Mr. Speaker, we all know the answer to Lisa McCave's question. Under the current law, there is no justice in limiting the eligibility for this tax intercept program to minors and disabled adults.

The good news is that we can correct this injustice. Improving our child support enforcement programs is neither a Republican nor a Democrat issue—it is an issue that should concern all of us. According to recent government statistics, there are approximately 12 million active cases where a child support order requires a noncustodial parent to contribute towards the support of his/her child. Of the \$13.7 billion owed pursuant to these orders in 1998, only half have been paid. Similar shortfalls in past years bring the combined delinquency total to \$35.3 billion. I am confident we can all agree to fix this injustice in our Federal tax refund offset program and help some of our most needy constituents receive the financial relief they are owed.

I would like to clarify for everyone's benefit that this legislation does not create a cause of action for a custodial parent to seek additional child support. The existing program merely helps custodial parents recover debt they are owed for a level of child support that was set

by a court after both sides had the opportunity to present their arguments about the proper size of the child support.

The Federal tax refund offset program is responsible for retrieving nearly one-third of all back child support collected. The time has come to make it a greater success. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and thank the Ways and Means Committee for its commitment to moving this bill to the House floor for debate in the near future.

HONORING THE GOLDEN APPLE SCHOLARS AWARD PROGRAM AND MS. SARAH OBERMARK FROM ILLINOIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, today I commend the 2000 Golden Apple Scholar award winners from my district. The Golden Apple Scholars program is to recruit talented high school juniors who want to become teachers.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize Ms. Sarah Obermark from Bond Community High School in Sorento, Illinois. Teachers, like parents, have a unique opportunity—to touch the life of a child. I can't think of a more rewarding experience.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was a former high school teacher. I want to wish Sarah all the same joy and success that I shared in my teaching career.

CONGRATULATING ALISON LITTELL MCHOSE

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 23, 2000

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Alison Littell McHose for her work on the behalf of unwed mothers and their infant children. Mrs. McHose has been chosen as the honoree at the annual dinner dance held by Birth Haven, a compassionate and supportive shelter for unwed mothers. Her selection comes in recognition of the extensive work Mrs. McHose has done on behalf of Birth Haven, including her efforts to secure funding from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

It should come as no surprise that Alison Littell McHose is dedicated to public service and helping those less fortunate than herself. She is the daughter of my good friends state Senator Robert Littell and Virginia Littell, former chairwoman of the New Jersey Republican State Committee. The Littells raised their daughter with a clear sense of responsibility to the community around her, and instilled in her their own firm values, sense of dedication and fearlessness of hard work.

Mrs. McHose has worked as a legislative aide in her father's Senate office in Franklin, NJ, for 4 years, handling budget issues, constituent case work, news releases, speeches and correspondence. As part of her duties, she acted as liaison between Birth Haven and Senator Littell, who chairs the State Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. Mrs. McHose helped Birth Haven secure state grants of \$40,000 in the fiscal 1999 state budget and \$50,000 in the 2000 budget. In addition, she was instrumental in handling the case of a former Birth Haven resident who needed state assistance.

Mrs. McHose's work with Birth Haven led to a strong personal interest in the organization. She has visited the facility and made extensive donations of supplies needed by the residents and volunteered her time.

Located in Newton, New Jersey, Birth Haven is a shelter for homeless pregnant women, able to house up to nine women simultaneously in a home-like setting where meals and housework are shared. The women, mostly in their teens or early 20's, are given proper prenatal care and counseling and enrolled for benefits such as Medicaid and the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program. Those without a high school diploma are required to attend class or seek a GED. Courses in homemaking, parenting and job-seeking skills are available as well. Some of the residents were homeless before they became pregnant. Others were kicked out of their homes by parents or boyfriends.

Mrs. McHose's work on behalf of Birth Haven and in Senator Littell's office are only her most recent accomplishments in public service. She was previously a policy council director in education and health care for a grassroots organization in Washington. She also spent four years at the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Treasury Department under the Bush administration.

Active in her community, she is vice-chairwoman of both the Franklin Economic Development Committee and the Franklin Business Development Corporation. She is a founding member of the Franklin Historical Society, a member of the capital campaign committee of the Sussex County YMCA, and an active member of the Junior League of Morristown. She also edits a nationally distributed family publication, *Living Age*.

Mrs. McHose is a graduate of the University of Maryland and Pope John XXIII High School in Sparta. She and her husband, Morgan, are the parents of a 2-year-old son, Logan, and make their home in Franklin.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. McHose on her work on behalf of unwed mothers and their infant children, and in wishing her the best as she continues to address the needs of those less fortunate than herself.

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