

Deadbeat parents targeted by new law

States have tried a number of methods to get parents who are delinquent in paying child support to pay. Wanted posters, garnishing wages, garnishing tax returns, jail time — you name it, some state in the union has tried it.

Unfortunately for families affected by this problem, many of these tactics remain empty threats because law enforcement agencies do not have the time or the manpower to enforce them.

So what would make a delinquent father or mother pay overdue child support?

The state of Maine thinks it has the answer, by revoking the driver's licenses of parents who do not pay their court-ordered child support.

Not only does the state have the power to take away driver's licenses, it also has the power to revoke professional licenses such as those required to practice medicine or law.

Residents of Maine affected by this law were warned repeatedly about the possible loss of their licenses before the state actually made good on the threat. Jane Shøehan, Maine Human Services Commissioner, told the Associated Press that the initial warning letters "yielded the state \$11.5 million in back payments."

Maine's governor, John R. McKernan, decided to propose the Family Financial Responsibility Act after he realized that the state was paying millions and millions of dollars to people who have become impoverished because one parent or the other was delinquent in making the required child support payments.

On July 1 some Oregon residents who fail to pay child support will also be subject to the same type of child support enforcement. The new law, ORS 25.750, will not be applied to doctors and lawyers but it will be applied to truck drivers, commercial fishermen and some other state-licensed professions.

Prior to ORS 25.750 taking effect there were a number of things that could be done to extract overdue child support from deadbeat parents.

The first step, according to Doug Mitchell, a deputy district attorney for Lane County, is a simple letter requesting child support. This letter is followed by others.

Next comes garnishment of wages, or the taking of child support money directly from the parent's wages. If that does not work, the state can put a lien on property. If the parent continues to be delinquent the court can hold him or her in contempt and send the parent to jail.

If a delinquent parent has his or her professional license revoked, how can he or she be expected to work to pay back the overdue child support? This is the argument used by many opponents of laws like those in Oregon and in Maine.

It is true that the delinquent parent will not be able to pay back the money owed their abandoned family if he or she is in prison, but the pain of poverty experienced by the delinquent parent in jail is essentially the same pain suffered by the impoverished child he or she has neglected to support.

Maine and Oregon are to be applauded for their very sincere efforts to put an end to the problem of delinquent parents. However, there is still much work to be done on this front, most of which must start at home.

If we as a nation want to rid ourselves of the problem of deadbeat parents we must make those parents feel their worth before they become mothers and fathers — when they are children. Children who grow up to feel worthless will treat their children as though they are worth nothing.



LETTERS

Agenda

Homosexuals aren't a constitutionally recognized minority, yet the media and opposition make a lightning jump to say that homosexuals are and the Oregon Citizens Alliance is taking away their rights as such.

Homosexuals all have constitutionally guaranteed rights as American citizens. They just don't have coercion of law to force acceptance and approval of homosexuality.

That's the debate. Will homosexuals be allowed to force acceptance of a lifestyle people don't agree with?

The homosexual agenda allows religious beliefs; people just cannot exercise them. Making homosexuality a minority, a Jewish delicatessen owner observing kosher law could be forced to hire homosexuals who are considered unclean.

What people do in the bedroom's privacy (within law) is their business. But when homosexuals demand minority status and to teach our children homosexuality as equal to race or nationality, then the public has the right to debate.

Since America's inception, communities have set their standards. OCA's initiative doesn't "take away" rights. It ensures the right of communities to set their standards.

Job protection is guaranteed everyone equally. Oregon law states personnel decisions cannot be based on non-job related factors in state government. One's sexuality isn't job related. It isn't a job qualification, duty or function. Since sexuality is "non-job" related, personnel decisions (hiring, firing, promotions, raises, etc.) cannot be based on it. Our initiative allows all branches of government to pass such ordinances protecting all people equally.

Merle Pacewicz
OCA Area Captain
Junction City

Gone too far

In the name of saving jobs America has gone to bizarre lengths. We keep on subsidizing tobacco so as not to put farmers out of their chosen work. The same, of course, is happening on and on here in the Northwest where we clearcut old-growth for-

est to save logging and mill towns from going under and losing their job base.

I know, I know, it's their way of life! Isn't it obvious by now that there are different values and forces at work now that tobacco companies have cheated for years to hide the deadly effect of their drugs from us, or that the timber barons have known for half a century that America could run out of trees to cut?

There is another sacred cow of jobs — the permanent high-paying jobs at the Pentagon. The United States is the biggest arms merchant in the world and there is no sign of a decrease in this most lucrative business or any sign of our own disarmament. Any lawmaker would be voted out if his district lost defense jobs! The United States space program operates in the same vein, holding on to job security, which costs us plenty.

We cannot go on at this insane pace, paying no heed to the environment or the "dumb middle class" which pays for all these programs with its taxes (corporations do not pay).

Alternative job opportunities are there and need to be explored more seriously.

Hilde K. Cherry
Eugene

Disgrace

Comparing homosexual practices to a person's ethnic heritage is a disgrace to the trials and struggles of America's true minorities. Attempting to create a minority classification based on wrong and potentially destructive behaviors is an insult to the citizens of this great country.

Today, homosexuals are attempting to compare their wrong sexual practices to being denied the right to vote, the right to use public restrooms and facilities and being forced to sit at the back of the bus. How can anyone compare such public disgrace and humiliation as that to the practices one chooses to do in the privacy of the bedroom?

If homosexuality is granted minority status, government entities and officials will be forced to present homosexuality to our children as something good, equal to race, gender or national origin, etc. This minority classification will force everyone's private sexual behavior into the

public arena for evaluation. Those identified as participating in homosexuality will be given special classification and considerations.

Granting civil rights protection for homosexuality is nothing more than special rights. Who else is afforded minority status based on their wrong behaviors? Stop minority status for homosexuality. Sign the OCA "Minority Status and Child Protection Act" at your local mall or call the Brooks office to get a petition and vote yes in November.

L. Miller
Deputy Director
OCA Lane County

Dependency

Decrying the cycle of dependency that keeps millions of Americans on the welfare rolls for years, President Clinton on June 15 unveiled his new \$9.3 billion welfare reform initiative.

This presidential effort is meant to save the treasury money and silence the critics of federal entitlement programs.

American politicians have been elected and reelected by appealing to the darker side of voters by lambasting welfare mothers and indolent fathers for receiving federal subsidies.

The same politicians, however, are themselves on the welfare rolls of political action committees which have their own agendas. For example, take pro-Israel PACs. Recently they succeeded in convincing members of Congress to supplement Israel's annual aid of \$3 billion with nearly \$242 million. Also, on March 31, President Clinton authorized the Defense Department to give Israel \$161.9 million in military equipment; and on April 29, Congress approved an \$80 million grant to Israel for Jewish refugees. American treasury and private donations will bring the total aid package to \$5 billion this fiscal year alone. This translates to \$1000 for every man, woman and child in a country of 5 million people. Since the creation of Israel in 1948, American taxpayers have doled out \$70 billion in aid to that country.

How can anyone complain about Americans on welfare when the state of Israel has been on welfare since its birth?

M. Reza Behnam
Eugene

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