



Call to Action: Child Support Enforcement May Be Cut Across-the-Board!

The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction has less than two weeks to craft a plan containing savings in discretionary programs, entitlement reforms, and/or revenue increases. There is no indication that it is anywhere near an agreement on anything. **Child support enforcement (CSE) is at risk of being cut across-the-board.**

Since the August enactment of the Budget Control Act, there has been legal ambiguity whether or not federal funds for child support administration and incentives would be subject to across-the-board cuts (sequestration) or if it would continue to be considered as an entitlement exempt from sequestration. There are conflicting provisions in prior budget laws containing a sequestration option and how CSE should be treated.

The congressional committees overseeing CSE are aware of the ambiguity. The Administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which has the power to sequester, has been asked to clarify and confirm the long-standing treatment of CSE as an entitlement, but such clarification has not been issued.

The National Women's Law Center prepared and sent a [legal brief](#) to OMB outlining the arguments why CSE should not be cut across-the-board. A 1985 budget law subjected child support to sequester under a special rule that recognized the reductions already scheduled in the administrative matching rate via the 1984 Child Support Amendments. In a 1997 law, Congress exempted CSE from sequester, and that provision was reaffirmed 2010.

Congress failed to remove the old 1985 provision, however, from law. Child support advocates argue that, under long-standing rules of statutory construction, the later provision of law supersedes any earlier provision.

At this point, the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement assumes the entire child support program would be subject to across-the-board cuts.

Please [click here to contact your members of Congress](#). Call them today to urge that they work with Super Committee members to urge OMB to protect CSE as a long-standing entitlement exempt from across-the-board cuts. For further information, please contact the NCSEA staff.

If you have any questions about the NCSEA legislative issues, please contact Colleen Eubanks at ColleenEubanks@ncsea.org or 703-506-2880.

