NCSEA
Shaping the Future of Child Support

NCSEA Legislative Update

February 2026

The National Child Support Engagement Association – Who We Are and What We Do

Our Mission: To promote and influence child support policies and services and to educate, connect, and inspire those who work in child support

Who We Are: Individuals and organizations with a passion for child support. Our members come from public, non-profit, and private sectors; and from local, state, tribal, national and international jurisdictions.

Legislative Update

House Ways and Means Committee Holds Child Support Hearing

On January 21, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Work and Welfare held a hearing on Child Support Modernization. Witnesses discussed the history of the Title IV-D program, which has not been materially changed since welfare reform in 1996 and is overdue for updates. Connie Chesnick, NCSEA President and Administrator, Wisconsin Division of Family and Economic Security in the Department of Children and Families outlined a number of proposed reforms to further strengthen the program. Ruth Anne Thornton, Director of the Child Support Division in the Texas Office of the Attorney General, also testified, describing the many program innovations her state has initiated.

During the hearing, bipartisan areas of interest emerged, including reforming the practice of retaining child support collections from current and former Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) households, updating enforcement tools to account for the prevalence of the gig economy, modernizing technology systems and engaging non-custodial parents with employment services. Watch the hearing here.

Ways and Means Committee Passes NCSEA-Supported Passport Bill

On January 14, the House Ways and Means Committee passed, 40-2, an NCSEA-supported bill to strengthen the Passport Denial Program. Authored by Rep. Beth Van Duyne (R-TX), the Ensuring Children Receive Support Act (H.R. 6903) requires the Secretary of State to revoke any U.S. passport issued to an individual exceeding $2,500 in outstanding child support payments. Consistent with NCSEA policy, the bill gives child support agencies another tool to ensure that individuals are meeting their child support obligations.

NCSEA Continues Work with Congress on Drafting Parenting Time Bill

NCSEA's leaders have been in a number of meetings with House and Senate congressional staff to refine a bipartisan parenting time bill. The draft **Providing Adequate Resources to Enhance Needed Time with Sons and Daughters Act** (PARENTS Act) would expand the use of federal incentive payments by states to support child support agencies' work to establish agreements for how much time a child spends with each parent as agreed to by the parents under a child support or medical support order. Language is being developed to ensure that there are processes to screen for domestic and family violence during the development of a possible parenting time agreement.

To learn more about parenting time, read this NCSEA brief. And, this NCSEA brief provides information about the impact of domestic violence on child support establishment and enforcement.

NCSEA
Shaping the Future of Child Support

What is the Child Support Program?

A High-Level Overview

The Child Support Program does not remove children from their homes, nor does it decide child custody matters. Established under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, the Child Support Program is a federal-state-tribal partnership that seeks to ensure children in single parent households receive financial and medical support from both parents and promotes family economic stability through reliable support payments.

Federal funding reimburses states for 66 percent of their child support program costs and provides performance-based incentives to reward high-performing state programs. State child support programs establish paternity, set and modify child support orders, and collect, enforce, and distribute payments. Applicants for TANF benefits are required to participate in the program. Other parents hear about the IV-D Program through friends, family, or the news.

Many child support policies were initially designed with exclusively a welfare cost recovery and enforcement mindset, not a family-centered one. However, States are increasingly moving towards practices to further improve the program's effectiveness, such as family-first distribution of child support payments, workforce and fatherhood partnerships, updated enforcement practices and offering digital and electronic services.

The Child Support Program is a core economic stability program for families and serves over 12 million children nationwide. In Fiscal Year 2024, the Child Support Program collected $29.5 billion, with 97 percent of those collections going to families. Additionally, for every $1 spent on administering the program collectively, nationwide, more than $4 was collected. This program has direct implications for workforce participation, public budgets, and child well-being.

NCSEA Resource Highlights

NCSEA Policy Forum & Website

The **2026 NCSEA Policy Forum** was held January 27-30 in Washington, D.C. The Policy Forum is THE conference dedicated to the policies and issues influencing the child support program at the national, state, tribal, and local levels. We invite Congressional staff to access the recorded version of any NCSEA Policy Forum 2026 session of interest to you. Contact NCSEA Executive Director Christopher Wood for more information.

The **NCSEA website** provides a wealth of up-to-date information about the child support program. In addition to Board resolutions, links to child support research and related resources, don't miss NCSEA's library or Quick Facts for Legislators which provide succinct, easy to understand information on hot child support topics.

NCSEA
1660 International Dr.| Suite 600 McLean, VA 22102
t: 703.506.2880
f: 703.506.3266
www.NCSEA.org