

252B.20 Suspension of support.

1. If the unit is providing child support enforcement services pursuant to this chapter, the parents of a dependent child for whom support has been ordered pursuant to chapter 252A, 252C, 252F, 598, 600B, or any other chapter, may jointly request the assistance of the unit in suspending the obligation for support if all of the following conditions exist:

a. The parents have reconciled and are cohabiting, and the child for whom support is ordered is living in the same residence as the parents, or the child is currently residing with the parent who is ordered to pay support. If the basis for suspension under this paragraph applies to at least one but not all of the children for whom support is ordered, the condition of this paragraph is met only if the support order includes a step change.

b. The child for whom support is ordered is not receiving public assistance pursuant to chapter 239B, 249A, or a comparable law of a foreign jurisdiction, unless the person against whom support is ordered is considered to be a member of the same household as the child for the purposes of public assistance eligibility.

c. The parents have signed a notarized affidavit attesting to the conditions under paragraphs "a" and "b", have consented to suspension of the support order or obligation, and have submitted the affidavit to the unit.

d. No prior request for suspension has been filed with the unit during the two-year period preceding the request, unless the request was filed during the two-year period preceding July 1, 2005, the unit denied the request because the suspension did not apply to all children for whom support is ordered, and the parents jointly file a request on or after July 1, 2005.

e. Any other criteria established by rule of the department.

2. Upon receipt of the application for suspension and properly executed and notarized affidavit, the unit shall review the application and affidavit to determine that the necessary criteria have been met. The unit shall then do one of the following:

a. Deny the request and notify the parents in writing that the application is being denied, providing reasons for the denial and notifying the parents of the right to proceed through private counsel. Denial of the application is not subject to contested case proceedings or further review pursuant to chapter 17A.

b. Approve the request and prepare an order which shall be submitted, along with the affidavit, to a judge of a district court for approval, suspending the accruing support obligation and, if requested by the obligee, and if not prohibited by chapter 252K, satisfying the obligation of support due the obligee. If the basis for suspension applies to at least one but not all of the children for whom support is ordered and the support order includes a step change, the unit shall prepare an order suspending the accruing support obligation for each child to whom the basis for suspension applies.

3. An order approved by the court for suspension of an accruing support obligation is effective upon the date of filing of the suspension order. The satisfaction of an obligation of support due the obligee shall be final upon the filing of the suspension order. A support obligation which is satisfied is not subject to the reinstatement provisions of this section.

4. An order suspending an accruing support obligation entered by the court pursuant to this section shall be considered a temporary order for the period of six months from the date of filing of the suspension order. However, the six-month period shall not include any time during which an application for reinstatement is pending before the court.

5. During the six-month period the unit may request that the court reinstate the accruing support order or obligation if any of the following conditions exist:

a. Upon application to the unit by either parent or other person who has physical custody of the child.

b. Upon the receipt of public assistance benefits, pursuant to chapter 239B, 249A, or a comparable law of a foreign jurisdiction, by the person entitled to receive support and the child on whose behalf support is paid, provided that the person owing the support is not considered to be a member of the same household as the child for the purposes of public assistance eligibility.

6. If a condition under subsection 5 exists, the unit may request that the court reinstate an accruing support obligation as follows:

a. If the basis for the suspension no longer applies to any of the children for whom an

accruing support obligation was suspended, the unit shall request that the court reinstate the accruing support obligations for all of the children.

b. If the basis for the suspension continues to apply to at least one but not all of the children for whom an accruing support obligation was suspended and if the support order includes a step change, the unit shall request that the court reinstate the accruing support obligation for each child for whom the basis for the suspension no longer applies.

7. Upon filing of an application for reinstatement, service of the application shall be made either in person or by first class mail upon both parents. Within ten days following the date of service, the parents may file a written objection with the clerk of the district court to the entry of an order for reinstatement.

a. If no objection is filed, the court may enter an order reinstating the accruing support obligation without additional notice.

b. If an objection is filed, the clerk of court shall set the matter for hearing and send notice of the hearing to both parents and the unit.

8. The reinstatement is effective as follows:

a. For reinstatements initiated under subsection 5, paragraph “a”, the date the notices were served on both parents pursuant to subsection 7.

b. For reinstatements initiated under subsection 5, paragraph “b”, the date the child began receiving public assistance benefits during the suspension of the obligation.

c. Support which became due during the period of suspension but prior to the reinstatement is waived and not due and owing unless the parties requested and agreed to the suspension under false pretenses.

9. If the order suspending a support obligation has been on file with the court for a period exceeding six months as computed pursuant to subsection 4, the order becomes final by operation of law and terminates the support obligation, and thereafter, a party seeking to establish a support obligation against either party shall bring a new action for support as provided by law.

10. This section shall not limit the rights of the parents or the unit to proceed by other means to suspend, terminate, modify, reinstate, or establish support.

11. This section does not provide for the suspension or retroactive modification of support obligations which accrued prior to the entry of an order suspending enforcement and collection of support pursuant to this section. However, if in the application for suspension, an obligee elects to satisfy an obligation of accrued support due the obligee, the suspension order may satisfy the obligation of accrued support due the obligee.

12. Nothing in this section shall prohibit or limit the unit or a party entitled to receive support from enforcing and collecting any unpaid or unsatisfied support that accrued prior to the suspension of the accruing obligation.

13. For the purposes of chapter 252H, subchapter II, regarding the criteria for a review or for a cost-of-living alteration under chapter 252H, subchapter IV, if a support obligation is terminated or reinstated under this section, such termination or reinstatement shall not be considered a modification of the support order.

14. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, “*step change*” means a change designated in a support order specifying the amount of the child support obligation as the number of children entitled to support under the order changes.

93 Acts, ch 79, §24; 94 Acts, ch 1171, §18; 96 Acts, ch 1141, §4; 97 Acts, ch 41, §32; 98 Acts, ch 1170, §46, 47; 2005 Acts, ch 112, §2 – 5; 2011 Acts, ch 25, §20

[T] Subsection 13 amended