

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2195
Author: Celeste Rodriguez (D), et al.
Amended: 8/20/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: 12-0, 6/23/26

AYES: Umberg, Niello, Allen, Ashby, Caballero, Durazo, Laird, Reyes, Stern,
Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO VOTE RECORDED: Valladares

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE: 5-0, 6/29/26

AYES: Becker, Ochoa Bogh, Laird, Pérez, Weber Pierson

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-2, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

NOES: Seyarto, Dahle

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 56-19, 5/27/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Child support: license suspensions

SOURCE: Coalition of Welfare Rights Organizations
End Child Poverty California
Western Center on Law and Poverty

DIGEST: This bill expands the existing prohibition on suspending the driver's license of a parent whose income is at or below 70% of their county median income, as defined, because the parent is in arrears on a child support payment, to a prohibition on suspending any license held by a parent below that income

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/20/26 make technical changes regarding licensure and licensure suspension.

ANALYSIS:

Existing federal law imposes, as a condition of a state's receipt of public benefit block grants, certain requirements relating to the state's collection of child and family support, including the requirement that states have and utilize a procedure for withholding, suspending, or restricting the licenses, including the driver's licenses, of those with overdue child or family support obligations. (42 U.S.C. §§ 654(20), 666(a)(16).)

Existing state law:

- 1) Provides that a minor child's parents have an equal responsibility to support their child in the manner suitable to the child's circumstances. (Family [Fam.] Code, § 3900.)
- 2) Provides that, if a parent has the duty to provide for their child and willfully fails to so provide, the other parent, or the child by a guardian ad litem, may bring an action against the parent to enforce the duty, and the court may order one or both parents to pay an amount necessary for the support of the child. (Fam. Code, Division [div.] 9, Part [pt.] 2, Chapter [ch.] 2, §§ 4000 et seq.)
- 3) Establishes a statewide uniform guideline for the calculation of child support ordered by the court under 2), consistent with federal regulations for child support guidelines. (Fam. Code, div. 9, pt. 2, ch. 2, art. 2, §§ 4050 et seq.)
- 4) Establishes the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) as the single organizational unit for the administration and management of California's child support program, including compliance necessary for federal financial participation. (Fam. Code, § 17202.)
- 5) Requires every county to maintain an Local Child Support Agency (LCSA) with the responsibility for promptly and effectively establishing, modifying, and enforcing child support obligations, as specified; and authorizes the LCSA to take appropriate action, including criminal action, in cooperation with district attorneys, to establish, modify, and enforce child support orders and, where appropriate, spousal support if the child is receiving public assistance, as specified. (Fam. Code, §§ 17400(a), 17500.)
- 6) Defines "board" as an entity, commission, department, committee, examiner, or agency that issues a license, certificate, credential, permit, registration, or any other authorization to engage in a business, occupation, or profession, or to the extent required by federal law or regulations, for recreational purposes, including the State Bar of California, the Department of Real Estate, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Medical Board of California, and other

boards regulated in the Business and Professions Code. (Fam. Code, § 17520(a).)

- 7) Requires an LCSA, on a monthly basis, to submit to DCSS a list of persons who are not in compliance with their court-ordered support obligations in a case being enforced pursuant to federal law. (Fam. Code, § 17520(b).)
- 8) Requires DCSS to consolidate the lists received in 7) and, within 30 calendar days of receipt, provide a copy of the consolidated list to each board as defined in 6). (Fam. Code, § 17520(c).)
- 9) Requires each board, upon receipt of a consolidated list in 8), to do all of the following:
 - a) Determine whether any person on the consolidated list is an applicant for licensure or license renewal.
 - b) If the applicant is on the list, immediately serve notice on the applicant of the board's intent to withhold issuance or renewal of the license, as specified.
 - c) If the applicant is otherwise eligible for a license, issue a temporary 150-day license; a second temporary 150-day license may be issued only for a driver's license other than a commercial license upon a showing of good cause.
 - d) DCSS may, at its discretion, provide to the covered boards a list of parents who are more than four months in arrears on child or family support payments and request that the listed obligors have their licenses suspended; the board must provide a notice of the intent to suspend the license in 150 days if the obligor does not pay the overdue child or family support. (Fam. Code, § 17520(e).)
- 10) Provides that an LCSA shall not issue a release on a license suspension under 9) if the applicant is not in compliance with the judgment or order for support; when the parent comes into compliance, the LCSA shall mail notice to the parent and the appropriate board stating that the parent is compliance, and the board shall process the release within five days of receipt. (Fam. Code, § 17520(j), (l).)
- 11) Provides that DCSS shall not include on its list sent to the DMV under 8) the information of a parent out of compliance with their support order if the parent's annual household income is at or below 70 percent of the median income for the county in which the parent resides, based on the most recent

available data published by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

- a) Beginning January 1, 2027, this provision will apply only to noncommercial driver's licenses.
- b) This provision shall be implemented only to the extent allowed under federal law. (Fam. Code, § 17520.5.)

This bill:

- 1) Extends the exemption on licensure suspension for parents whose household income is at or below 70% of the county median income to all license and permit types.
- 2) Provides that the support obligor shall be entitled to relief from denying, withholding, or suspending any license if they provide proof to the local child support agency that their income is at or below the 70% threshold.
- 3) Provides that these changes become operative January 1, 2027 or on the date CDSS notifies the legislature that the California Child Support Enforcement System can perform the necessary automation to implement these changes, whichever is later.

Background

Author's Statement. According to the author, "AB 2195 addresses a counterproductive feature of California's child support enforcement system. Under existing law, a parent who falls behind on child support can be placed at risk of having a license denied, withheld, or suspended, including licenses that allow that parent to work in a business, occupation, or profession. For low-income parents, that approach can make it harder to maintain employment, earn income, and ultimately pay support.

"This bill builds on the policy California already adopted for driver's licenses SB 1055 (Kamlager, Ch. 830, Stats. 2022) by applying the same income-based protection to other licenses. Like SB1055, AB2195 would limit the use of license suspensions to individuals whose income is above 70% of area median income for their county of residence. Individuals under this threshold are considered low-income under state law, and thus more vulnerable to cascading harms from financial instability.

“AB 2195 also includes a process for local child support agencies to request employment and income documentation from an obligor who is out of compliance with a support order. The bill gives the obligor 30 days to provide that information, requires the notice to include direct contact information for the assigned caseworker or designated contact, and allows an obligor to dispute an income determination through existing administrative and judicial review procedures. If an obligor does not provide the requested documentation, the bill establishes a rebuttable presumption that the obligor earns more than the 70 percent threshold, allowing the existing license suspension process to move forward.

“The goal of AB 2195 is straightforward: child support enforcement should help families receive support, not create new barriers that make payment less likely. This bill preserves accountability while recognizing that suspending a low-income parent’s work-related license can undermine the very purpose of child support enforcement. By keeping low-income parents connected to work, AB 2195 promotes a more practical, fair, and employment-centered approach to supporting children and families.”

Child Support and License Suspension. In California, if a parent falls behind on child support payments, a variety of licenses can be suspended. These include licenses that are critical to employment. Information provided by the bill sponsors from a Public Records Act request provides responses from 7 of the 13 licensing boards (excluding the DMV) regarding the number of license suspensions and denials over 26,000 occupational license suspensions and denials over a five-year period. The boards with the highest levels of suspensions are: Bureau of Security & Investigative Services (16,187); Board of Barbering & Cosmetology (2,784); Department of Insurance (2,378); Commission on Teaching Credentialing (1,349); and Board of Vocational Nursing & Psychiatric Technicians (678). Previously, driver’s licenses were included in licenses that could be suspended. This practice ended with the passage of SB 1055 (Kamlager, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2022). The Senate Judiciary Committee analysis of that bill wrote in part, “When a car is so vital to maintaining employment, the loss of a car—or a license—can be ruinous. California has already recognized the perversity of suspending a person’s driver’s license for failure to pay, in legislation enacted in 2017 to prohibit license suspensions for failure to pay traffic fines. As then-Governor Jerry Brown noted, the suspension did not help the state collect on unpaid fines, but could ‘send low-income people into a cycle of job losses and more poverty.’” This bill builds on this previous legislation by expanding the limits on license suspension beyond drivers’ licenses and to professional licenses vital to employment.

Related/Prior Legislation:

SB 1055 (Kamlager, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2022) prohibits, effective January 1, 2025, DCSS from seeking the denial, withholding, or suspension of a driver's license from low-income child support obligors.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, the fiscal effect is as follows:

Estimated minor, absorbable administrative workload costs to DCSS.

Additional possible loss of child support revenue of an unknown but potentially significant amount, to the extent the threat of license suspension increases the likelihood of payment. (General Fund)

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/20/26)

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations (co-source)

End Child Poverty California Powered by Grace (co-source)

Western Center on Law & Poverty (co-source)

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto

Courage California

End Child Poverty California

Family Reunification, Equity, and Empowerment Project

Legal Services for Prisoners With Children

Legal Services of Northern California

Starting Over Inc.

Truth and Justice in Child Support Coalition

University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law Homeless Advocacy Clinic

Western Center on Law and Poverty

Young Community Developer

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/20/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the Coalition of Child Welfare Rights Organizations:

Current law requires occupational boards, upon receiving a list of names from the Department of Child Support Services, to initiate the process to deny or

suspend licenses of any parent who is behind in making child support payments, regardless of any other circumstances. AB 2195 will end the overbroad and punitive impact of existing law, and will re-form an ineffective, costly and administratively burdensome requirement that creates distrust between parents and the child support system, undermining the state's goal of improving the well-being of children and families.

This bill is modeled on the successful passage of SB 1055 (Kamlager) in 2022 which limited driver's license suspensions as an enforcement action for unpaid child support to cases where parents' income was above 70% of the Area Median Income (AMI). An Orange County evaluation of SB 1055 found that after implementing SB 1055, Orange County's child support agency experienced no significant impact on collections—in fact, collections increased. Additionally, limiting license suspensions to parents resulted in significant administrative savings for the county agency, equal to two full time case workers. California has other more effective tools to collect child support, such as wage garnishments and tax refund offsets.

Interfering with a parent's ability to earn income by suspending their occupational license, hamper's their ability to pay child support. It is time to end this policy which does not support children and families.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 56-19, 5/27/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Valencia, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: Alanis, Bains, Castillo, Chen, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Johnson, Lackey, Macedo, Sanchez, Tangipa, Wallis

NO VOTE RECORDED: Gabriel, Muratsuchi, Patterson, Celeste Rodriguez, Ta

Prepared by: Heather Hopkins / HUMAN S. / (916) 651-1524

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