



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

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Idaho's ability to collect child support payments in question after committee votes to table bill

The future of Idaho's Child Support program is uncertain after members of the House Judiciary, Rules and Administration committee voted Friday afternoon to table Senate Bill 1067. The bill would have allowed the state to meet minimum federal requirements for working on child support cases with foreign countries.

"This is new territory for us," said Richard Armstrong, director of the Department of Health and Welfare, which manages the state's child support program. "We'll work with our federal partners to determine the total impact, but this vote will make it nearly impossible for us to enforce child support like we should, so Idaho's children are taken care of. The bottom line is that Idaho families may not receive their support money because we will not have the tools we need to make sure those payments are made."

It took over five years for all countries and parties involved to develop the language and to reach consensus. One of the purposes of this legislation was to protect United States citizens from other countries' laws.

Health and Welfare currently receives and distributes \$205 million in support payments for 155,000 children. The bill had earlier passed the Senate unanimously, but it met resistance at the House committee level.

Some committee members seemed to take issue with the idea that the legislation would require Idaho to uphold Sharia law, or other laws. However, the committee heard testimony from an Idaho Deputy Attorney General stating that provisions in the act are intended to protect Idaho from any radical or revolutionary orders. Idaho judges have the authority to reject cases that do not meet Idaho standards.

Communications with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicate that \$16.1 million in federal funding will be cut off immediately, along with the state's ability to use federal databases for child support enforcement. These databases are the main tools used by the program for locating non-custodial parents and collecting support order payments. Examples include the New Hire Reporting database that alerts the program when a non-custodial parent starts a new job, or the Federal Tax Offset program that can collect arrears payments from tax returns. Another database provides Idaho with the real-time communications with other states' child support programs to collect outstanding support payments for Idaho children from non-custodial parents living in other states.

There is concern the legislative decision could have ramifications on other federal funding streams that require states to be in compliance with national child support laws. Approximately \$35 million in federal funding from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families could be affected. DHW is in contact with federal programs and will share information as it becomes available.

The vote to table SB1067 by the House Judiciary, Rules and Administration Committee included Reps. Thomas Dayley, Lynn Luker, Shannon McMillan, Kathleen Sims, Janet Trujillo, Don Cheatham, Ryan Kerby, Ronald Nate and Heather Scott.

All families who rely on child support payments are encouraged to [contact their legislators](#).

[Text of SB1067](#)