

(Washington DC) With passage of the Budget Reconciliation bill, the Republican controlled Congress chose to cripple state enforcement of child support payments. This bill will cut \$1.5 billion from the federal child support enforcement funds thereby reducing child support collections by \$8.4 billion over 10 years. Consequently, states will have to make up this funding shortfall at a time when many states are barely able to adequately fund programs.

Democrats objected to this legislation because it will add to the burdens of American families struggling to make ends meet. Moreover, these funding cuts will have a ripple effect as states will experience increased use of other programs as a substitute for child support payments. Early estimates show that Texas will have to pay an extra \$1.85 billion for food stamps, Medicaid and assistance for needy families.

"It is inconceivable to me that Republicans would cut funding for a program that makes irresponsible parents escape their duty to provide for their children," said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez. "Forcing the states to fund child payment enforcement will undermine the program as Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott said when the proposed cuts were announced in November:

"I think all Texans agree that Texas children should not be the target of budget cuts. The proposed cuts would take food off of the tables of children and clothes off their backs. Washington lawmakers need to fully understand the harm this legislation, if passed, will cause Texas children and families."-San Antonio Express-News 11/29/05

Texas stands to lose an estimated \$418 million through 2010, which would severely impair the state's ability to find 'dead-beat' dads and make them honor their commitment to their children. Last year, Attorney General Abbott's office collected \$188 million in child support for nearly 100,000 San Antonio-area families.

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