

**Summary of H.R. 1896, the *International Child Support Recovery Improvement Act of 2013***  
Sponsored by Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Reichert (R-WA) and Ranking Member Doggett (D-TX)

Under the current Federal Child Support Enforcement program, States have the option to recognize child support orders from other countries, and many of them do. Unfortunately, at times other countries do not reciprocate our States' efforts to collect child support from a noncustodial parent living abroad. To address this problem, the United States negotiated and signed the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance in 2007. The Senate then gave its consent in 2010, but the United States cannot implement the treaty without enacting implementing legislation.

H.R. 1896 provides the necessary implementing legislation and includes two additional no-cost improvements to the Federal Child Support Enforcement Program.

**Section by Section Summary of the Bill**

- **Sec. 1: Title.** This bill is called the “International Child Support Recovery Improvement Act of 2013.”
- **Sec. 2: Amendments to Ensure Access to Child Support Services for International Cases.** Provides the implementing language needed to ratify the Hague Convention, a structured system for information exchange and enforcement of child support cases for participating countries, enabling States to more easily collect on child support orders involving parents abroad. The legislation requires States to enact legislative changes so their State laws are consistent with the treaty, although some have already made such changes. States will need to enact these changes or risk losing Federal administrative funds. Ten States have already enacted these changes, but their provisions will not be in force until all States have and the treaty is ratified. *Effective upon enactment.*
- **Sec. 3: Data Exchange Standardized for Improved Interoperability.** Continues previous bipartisan Human Resources subcommittee efforts and directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop standardized data elements to be used in improving the accuracy and administration of child support benefits and services. *Effective 12 months after enactment.*
- **Sec 4. Efficient Use of the National Directory of New Hires for Federally- Sponsored Research Assessing the Effectiveness of Federal Policies and Programs in Achieving Labor Market Outcomes.** Allows non-governmental researchers access to data in the National Directory of New Hires for use in evaluating whether reemployment programs are working as intended. Researchers argue that currently it is difficult to gain access to wage information, driving them to use unverified self-reported income information, which reduces the reliability of program evaluations. Access to NDNH will also reduce data collection costs so policies can be reviewed more cost-effectively, without sacrificing quality and promoting improved policy design in the future. Anticipating possible privacy concerns associated with providing expanded access to any personally identifiable information contained in the NDNH, the bill requires research firms to uphold strict rules governing the data's confidentiality and provides firm penalties for unauthorized disclosure of this data, similar to the treatment of tax data held by the Internal Revenue Service. *Effective upon enactment.*
- **Sec 5. Budgetary Effects.** Provides the necessary Senate budget language so the bill can be passed without amendment and proceed to the President.

**Preliminary Budget Estimate**

A preliminary CBO cost estimate indicates the legislation would result in small net savings (≈\$500,000 over 10 years) as a result of administrative savings due to some States' taking up the option to require reciprocating or treaty countries to go through their central authorities with child support requests, or to simply reject requests from non-reciprocating or treaty countries.



May 3, 2013

Representative David Reichert, Chairman  
Representative Lloyd Doggett, Ranking Member  
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Reichert and Ranking Member Doggett:

The National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA) supports the bipartisan *International Child Support Recovery Improvement Act of 2013* (H.R. 1896) and urges the Committee to consider it as soon as possible.

NCSEA members helped craft the language in the 2007 Hague Convention Treaty on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance. The provisions in Section 2 of the bill provide the language necessary to implement it. The Treaty contains procedures for processing international child support cases that are uniform, simple, efficient, accessible, and cost-free to U.S. citizens seeking support in other countries. It is founded on the agreement of countries ratifying the Convention to recognize and enforce each other's support orders.

This bill will assist state and county child support staff who encounter challenging and time-consuming international cases. Presently, there are no agreed upon standards of proof, forms or methods of communication. As more parents cross international borders leaving children behind, international child support enforcement is more important than ever. Ratification of the Convention by the United States will mean that more children will receive financial support from their parents residing in countries that are also signatories to the Convention

NCSEA has long sought congressional action on this issue, and welcomed last year's bipartisan action by the full House which adopted a nearly identical bill. This measure will help to ensure our nation's children receive the financial support to which they are entitled.

Thank you again for your leadership on this bill.

Sincerely,

Colleen Delaney Eubanks, CAE  
Executive Director

June 11, 2013

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*President*

The Honorable Congressman Reichert  
1127 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Congressman Doggett  
201 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Reichert and Doggett,

I am writing to congratulate you on advancing H.R. 1896, The International Child Support Recovery Improvement Act of 2013, to the House floor.

Last year, I was invited to testify before the Subcommittee on Human Resources regarding this bill. During my testimony, I pointed out that the bill includes an important technical provision that enables researchers to more easily access the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) database, which contains earnings and employment data collected by states from employers. Removing this barrier in the law will result in more accurate, cost-effective assessments of the employment effects of federal programs.

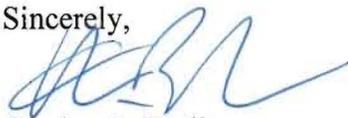
Independent research firms like MDRC are contracted by the government to evaluate the extent to which federal programs work; in many cases, a key measure of effectiveness is the programs' long-term impact on participants' employment and earnings. The NDNH database, maintained by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, houses employment and earnings data reported by the states for child support enforcement purposes. However, research contractors are generally unable to access this essential database. Instead they are forced to get the *very same data* directly from the states, at great cost to the federal government and at considerable burden in duplicative reporting for the states.

In this time of severe budget constraints, Congress must have credible, nonpartisan information to understand whether federally supported programs actually help people find work and increase their earnings. The technical provision in this bill would ensure the availability of data necessary for researchers to examine the effectiveness of these programs.

This provision expands researchers' access to NDNH data and also maintains strong privacy protections. Since personally identifiable information is contained in the NDNH database, the provision requires research firms to continue to uphold strict rules governing the data's confidentiality and provides severe penalties for unauthorized disclosure of this data.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of giving researchers greater access to NDNH data. Attached is my testimony from last year for further reference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Berlin', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Gordon L. Berlin

Attachment