

CHAPTER 188

AN ACT concerning health care coverage pursuant to a child support order and amending P.L.1981, c.417 and P.L.1995, c.58.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 5 of P.L.1981, c.417 (C.2A:17-56.11) is amended to read as follows:

C.2A:17-56.11 Notice to payor; binding.

5. a. An income withholding made under P.L.1981, c.417 (C.2A:17-56.8 et seq.) and provisions for health care coverage shall be binding upon the payor and successor payors immediately after service upon the payor by the Probation Division of a copy of the income withholding and an order for the provision of health care coverage, by regular mail. The payor is to pay the withheld amount to the Probation Division at the same time the obligor is paid. The payor shall implement withholding and the provisions for health care coverage no later than the first pay period that ends immediately after the date the notice was postmarked, except that the payor is not required to alter regular pay cycles to comply with the withholding. For each payment, other than payment received from the unemployment compensation fund, the payor may receive \$1.00, which shall be deducted from the obligor's income in addition to the amount of the support order to compensate the payor for the administrative expense of processing the withholding.

Notice to the payor shall include, but not be limited to, instructions for the provisions for health care coverage, the amount to be withheld from the obligor's income and a statement that the total amount withheld for support and other purposes may not be in excess of the maximum amount permitted under section 303 (b) of the federal Consumer Credit Protection Act (15 U.S.C.s.1673 (b)); that the payor shall send the amount to the Probation Division at the same time the obligor is paid, unless the Probation Division directs that payment be made to another individual or entity; that the payor may deduct and retain a fee of \$1.00 in addition to the amount of the support order except when the payment is received from the unemployment compensation fund; that withholding is binding on the payor until further notice by the Probation Division; that, in accordance with section 6 of P.L.1981, c.417 (C.2A:17-56.12), the payor is subject to a fine and civil damages as determined by the court for discharging an obligor from employment, refusing to employ, or taking disciplinary action against an obligor subject to an income withholding because of the withholding or any obligation which it imposes upon the payor; that the payor is subject to a fine as determined by the court for failure to withhold support from the obligor's income or pay the withheld amount to the Probation Division; that if the payor fails to take appropriate action with regard to the provisions for health care coverage or withhold wages in accordance with the provisions of the notice, the payor is liable for any medical expenses incurred by the children subject to the provisions for health care coverage and any amount up to the accumulated amount the payor should have withheld from the obligor's income; that the withholding shall have priority over any other legal process under State law against the same income; that the payor may combine withheld amounts from the obligor's income in a single payment to the Probation Division and separately identify the portion of the single payment which is attributable to each obligor unless submitted pursuant to section 7 of P.L.1981, c.417 (C.2A:17-56.13) or through electronic funds transfer; that if there is more than one support order for withholding against a single obligor, the payor shall withhold the payments on a pro rata basis to fully comply with the support orders, to the extent that the total amount withheld does not exceed the limits imposed under section 303 (b) of the federal Consumer Credit Protection Act (15 U.S.C. s.1673 (b)); that the payor shall implement withholding no later than the first pay period that ends immediately after the date the notice was postmarked, except that the payor is not required to alter regular pay cycles to comply with the withholding; and that the payor shall notify the Probation Division promptly upon the termination of the obligor's employment benefits and provide the obligor's last known address and the name and address of the obligor's new payor, if known.

A payor served with an income withholding notice shall be liable to the obligee for failure to deduct the amounts specified. The obligee or the Probation Division may commence a proceeding against the payor for accrued deductions, together with interest and reasonable attorney's fees.

In accordance with section 314 of Pub.L.104-193, a payor who complies with an income withholding notice that is regular on its face shall be immune from civil liability for conduct in compliance with the notice.

b. When a payor receives an income withholding notice issued by another state, the payor shall apply the income withholding law of the state in which the obligor's principal place of employment is located in determining:

- (1) the payor's fee for processing the income withholding;
- (2) the maximum amount permitted to be withheld from the obligor's income;
- (3) the time periods within which the payor must implement the income withholding order and forward the child support payment;
- (4) the priorities for withholding and allocating income withheld for multiple obligees; and
- (5) any withholding terms or conditions not specified in the support order or notice.

c. If an obligor is injured and eligible for workers' compensation under chapter 15 of Title 34 of the Revised Statutes or other disability benefits, the payor shall forward a copy of the income withholding to the insurance carrier at the same time an obligor's claim for workers' compensation is submitted to the Division of Workers' Compensation in the Department of Labor. The income withholding shall be binding upon the insurance carrier and the insurance carrier shall implement the income withholding pursuant to the provisions of this section.

d. The Probation Division shall use the National Medical Support Notice for medical support orders upon its adoption by federal regulation pursuant to the "Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998," Pub.L.105-200.

2. Section 1 of P.L.1995, c.58 (C.2A:34-23c) is amended to read as follows:

C.2A:34-23c Child support order; health care coverage provisions.

1. Any order or judgment that includes child support shall include provisions indicating the party responsible for maintaining health care coverage for the child and the terms and conditions by which that coverage is to be maintained.

The provisions of the order or judgment relating to health care coverage shall be enforced through the National Medical Support Notice, upon its adoption by federal regulation pursuant to the "Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998," Pub.L. 105-200.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved July 31, 2001.