



## **Child Support Enforcement Program**

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### **ABA Urges Restored Funding for Child Support Enforcement**

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) included deep cuts in federal funding for the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program. Section 7309 of the DRA eliminated the federal match on CSE incentive payments to states that perform well in their overall enforcement efforts. Previously, states were required under federal law to reinvest these funds back into child support enforcement efforts. In addition, Section 7308 of the DRA cut the CSE federal matching rate for the laboratory costs associated with establishing paternity from 90% to 66%.

These cuts to the CSE program damage the ability of the states to collect child support owed by non-custodial parents. A bipartisan group of lawmakers have introduced legislation to repeal Section 7309 of the DRA, which would restore federal matching funds for CSE incentive payments. Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) is leading these efforts in the Senate with the introduction of S. 803, the "Child Support Protection Act of 2007." Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA) introduced H.R. 1386, companion legislation in the House.

#### **The ABA urges you to support legislation to restore funding for the Child Support Enforcement program because:**

- **The CSE program has helped strengthen families by consistently securing financial support for children from their non-custodial parent.** The CSE program has accomplished this on a continuing basis. It allows many families to remain self-sufficient and limits their need for other federal assistance programs thus reducing future government spending. Historically, states have used these funds to establish and enforce child support obligations and to obtain health care coverage for children.
- **The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that \$8.9 billion in child support owed by non-custodial parents will go uncollected over ten years with the elimination of the incentive match.** The potential impact of the cuts in CSE matching funds could be even worse because this calculation assumes that every state will step in and make up for half of the funding cut. These cuts are only estimated to save \$1.6 billion in federal funds over five years, but will result in a far greater cost of lost child support for America's children.
- **Cuts to the CSE program will reverse decades worth of progress made in collecting child support payments.** According to the Congressional Research Service, child support payments collected by CSE agencies increased from \$1 billion in FY1978 to \$21.9 billion in FY2004. This proven system of accomplishment should not be dismantled, especially for a program that is estimated to handle at least 50% of all child support cases.