SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair
2025-2026 Regular Session

AB 2195 (Celeste Rodriguez)
Version: May 22, 2026
Hearing Date: June 23, 2026
Fiscal: Yes
Urgency: No
AWM

SUBJECT

Child support: license suspensions

DIGEST

This bill expands the existing prohibition on suspending the driver's license of a parent whose income is at or below 70 percent of their county median income, as defined, because the parent is in arrears on a child support payment, to a prohibition on suspending any license held by a parent below that income threshold; and establishes a process for the local child support agency (LCSA) to verify a parent's income for purpose of determining whether they are eligible for licensure suspension.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a condition of receiving certain block grants for state programs aiding low-income individuals, federal law requires California to have a procedure for suspending the licenses, including the drivers' licenses, and permits of persons who are behind on their court-ordered child support payments. Once a noncustodial parent is more than 30 days late on a court-ordered support payment, their name is transmitted to the state's various licensing boards and the DMV; the person then has another 150 days to come into compliance with their obligations, agree to a modification with the local child support agency (LCSA), or have their license suspended.

In 2022, the Legislature enacted SB 1055 (Kamlager, Ch. 830, Stats. 2022), which prohibits a noncustodial parent's driver's license from being suspended if their income is at or below 70 percent of the median income for their county of residence. SB 1055 recognized that suspending a low-income parent's driver's license makes it less, rather than more, likely that the parent will be able to come into compliance with their support obligation; suspending a driver's license can also be excessively punitive, to the extent it also makes it more difficult for the parent to engage in everyday chores, medical appointments, and visiting their child.

This bill expands SB 1022's protections for parents with income at or below 70 percent of the median income for their county of residence to all types of licenses and permits. For all licenses except a noncommercial driver's license, the parent's income must be presumed to be above the 70 percent threshold unless the parent provides documentation to the LCSA establishing their income level, thereby requiring a parent to engage with the LCSA as a condition of keeping their license.

This bill is sponsored by the Coalition of Welfare Rights Organizations, End Child Poverty California, and the Western Center on Law and Poverty and is supported by Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, Legal Services for Prisoners With Children, Legal Services of Northern California, the Truth and Justice in Child Support Coalition, the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law Homeless Advocacy Clinic, and Young Community Developers. The Committee has not received timely opposition to this bill. If this Committee passes this bill, it will be referred to the Senate Human Services Committee.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW

Existing federal law imposes, as a condition of a state's receipt of public benefit block grants, certain requirements relating to the state's collection of child and family support, including the requirement that states have and utilize a procedure for withholding, suspending, or restricting the licenses, including the driver's licenses, of those with overdue child or family support obligations. (42 U.S.C. §§ 654(20), 666(a)(16).)

Existing state law:

1) Provides that a minor child's parents have an equal responsibility to support their child in the manner suitable to the child's circumstances. (Fam. Code, § 3900.)

2) Provides that, if a parent has the duty to provide for their child and willfully fails to so provide, the other parent, or the child by a guardian ad litem, may bring an action against the parent to enforce the duty, and the court may order one or both parents to pay an amount necessary for the support of the child. (Fam. Code, div. 9, pt. 2, ch. 2, §§ 4000 et seq.)

3) Establishes a statewide uniform guideline for the calculation of child support ordered by the court under 2), consistent with federal regulations for child support guidelines. (Fam. Code, div. 9, pt. 2, ch. 2, art. 2, §§ 4050 et seq.)

4) Establishes the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) as the single organizational unit for the administration and management of California's child support program, including compliance necessary for federal financial participation. (Fam. Code, § 17202.)

5) Requires every county to maintain an LCSA with the responsibility for promptly and effectively establishing, modifying, and enforcing child support obligations, as specified; and authorizes the LCSA to take appropriate action, including criminal action, in cooperation with district attorneys, to establish, modify, and enforce child support orders and, where appropriate, spousal support if the child is receiving public assistance, as specified. (Fam. Code, §§ 17400(a), 17500.)

6) Defines "board" as an entity, commission, department, committee, examiner, or agency that issues a license, certificate, credential, permit, registration, or any other authorization to engage in a business, occupation, or profession, or to the extent required by federal law or regulations, for recreational purposes, including the State Bar of California, the Department of Real Estate, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Medical Board of California, and other boards regulated in the Business and Professions Code. (Fam. Code, § 17520(a).)

7) Requires an LCSA, on a monthly basis, to submit to DCSS a list of persons who are not in compliance with their court-ordered support obligations in a case being enforced pursuant to federal law. (Fam. Code, § 17520(b).)

8) Requires DCSS to consolidate the lists received in 7) and, within 30 calendar days of receipt, provide a copy of the consolidated list to each board as defined in 6). (Fam. Code, § 17520(c).)

9) Requires each board, upon receipt of a consolidated list in 8), to do all of the following:
   a) Determine whether any person on the consolidated list is an applicant for licensure or license renewal.
   b) If the applicant is on the list, immediately serve notice on the applicant of the board's intent to withhold issuance or renewal of the license, as specified.
   c) If the applicant is otherwise eligible for a license, issue a temporary 150-day license; a second temporary 150-day license may be issued only for a driver's license other than a commercial license upon a showing of good cause.
   d) DCSS may, at its discretion, provide to the covered boards a list of parents who are more than four months in arrears on child or family support payments and request that the listed obligors have their licenses suspended; the board must provide a notice of the intent to suspend the license in 150 days if the obligor does not pay the overdue child or family support. (Fam. Code, § 17520(e).)

10) Provides that an LCSA shall not issue a release on a license suspension under 9) if the applicant is not in compliance with the judgment or order for support; when the parent comes into compliance, the LCSA shall mail notice to the parent and the appropriate board stating that the parent is compliance, and the board shall process the release within five days of receipt. (Fam. Code, § 17520(j), (*l*).)

11) Provides that DCSS shall not include on its list sent to the DMV under 8) the information of a parent out of compliance with their support order if the parent's annual household income is at or below 70 percent of the median income for the county in which the parent resides, based on the most recent available data published by the Department of Housing and Community Development.
    a) Beginning January 1, 2027, this provision will apply only to noncommercial driver's licenses.
    b) This provision shall be implemented only to the extent allowed under federal law. (Fam. Code, § 17520.5.)

This bill:

1) Extends the exemption on licensure suspension for parents whose household income is at or below 70 percent of the county median income to all license and permit types, pursuant to the process set forth below.

2) Requires the LCSA, when a parent is more than 30 days out of compliance with their support obligation, to send the parent a notice instructing them to submit employment and income documentation to the LCSA within 30 days of receiving the notice to determine the parent's annual household income.
    a) The notice shall include the direct telephone number for the assigned caseworker or other individual designated to receive the documentation.
    b) Service of the notice shall be completed by mail, as specified.

3) Provides that a parent who fails to timely provide employment documentation to the LCSA pursuant to 2) is presumed to earn more than 70 percent of the area median income.
    a) A parent may dispute the application of this presumption or other determination that their income is above 70 percent of the county median through existing administrative and judicial review procedures.
    b) This presumption does not apply with respect to a noncommercial driver's license.

4) Provides that, when an LCSA has verified the parent's income and determined that they are at or below 70 percent of the area median income, the LCSA shall not require additional employment and income documentation for a period of six months unless the LCSA has reason to believe that the parent's income has materially changed.
    a) After the six-month period, if the parent becomes delinquent on child support payments, the LCSA may request updated documentation pursuant to the requirements of 2).
    b) If a parent provides employment and income documentation to the LCSA after the 30-day period that shows their income is less than 70 percent of the

area median income, the LCSA shall follow the existing process for releasing a licensure suspension.

5) Provides that 2)-4) do not apply to support obligors during the first 12 months after the initial establishment of the order of support.

COMMENTS

1. Author's comment

According to the author:

> AB 2195 addresses a counterproductive feature of California's child support enforcement system. Under existing law, a parent who falls behind on child support can be placed at risk of having a license denied, withheld, or suspended, including licenses that allow that parent to work in a business, occupation, or profession. For low-income parents, that approach can make it harder to maintain employment, earn income, and ultimately pay support.
>
> This bill builds on the policy California already adopted for driver's licenses SB 1055 (Kamlager, Ch. 830, Stats. 2022) by applying the same income-based protection to other licenses. Like SB1055, AB2195 would limit the use of license suspensions to individuals whose income is above 70% of area median income for their county of residence. Individuals under this threshold are considered low-income under state law, and thus more vulnerable to cascading harms from financial instability.
>
> AB 2195 also includes a process for local child support agencies to request employment and income documentation from an obligor who is out of compliance with a support order. The bill gives the obligor 30 days to provide that information, requires the notice to include direct contact information for the assigned caseworker or designated contact, and allows an obligor to dispute an income determination through existing administrative and judicial review procedures. If an obligor does not provide the requested documentation, the bill establishes a rebuttable presumption that the obligor earns more than the 70 percent threshold, allowing the existing license suspension process to move forward.
>
> The goal of AB 2195 is straightforward: child support enforcement should help families receive support, not create new barriers that make payment less likely. This bill preserves accountability while recognizing that suspending a low-income parent's work-related license can undermine the very purpose of child support enforcement. By keeping low-income parents connected to work, AB 2195 promotes a more practical, fair, and employment-centered approach to supporting children and families.

2. Background on a parent's child support obligations and licensure suspension

Every parent has the duty to financially support their minor child.[1] If a parent fails to provide that support, the child's other parent, or the child through a guardian ad litem, may sue the parent for an order of support.[2] Unless the court finds a legal basis for excusing the parent's support obligation, the court will enter a support order in an amount calculated based on the statewide child support guidelines.[3] In California, unpaid support payments accrue interest at 10 percent per annum,[4] the highest rate in the country.

Federal law requires states, as a condition of the receipt of public benefit block grants, to have a program for suspending driver's licenses of parents who have fallen behind on child support payments when the child is receiving those benefits.[5] The governing federal statute does not, however, prescribe the nature of the state's program.

Until 2025, California had a single suspension process for all parents and all licenses. Under this process, DCSS would place a parent's name on their suspension list as soon as the parent was more than 30 days in arrears on their child support payments, which was one of the shortest periods in the country.[6] After the relevant board or DMV received the parent's name, however, the license would not be immediately revoked; instead, the parent would be issued a 150-day temporary license, giving them 5 months to try to become current on their support obligations.[7]

In 2022, however, the Legislature enacted SB 1055 (Kamlager, Ch. 830, Stats. 2022), which prohibited the suspension of drivers' licenses for parents in arrears with household income at or below 70 percent of the median income for their county of residence, as determined by the Department of Housing and Community Development.[8] The measure, which took effect in 2025, recognized that suspending a low-income parent's driver's license makes it harder, not easier, for them to reduce their child support debt.

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[1] Fam. Code, § 3900.
[2] *Id.*, § 4000.
[3] Fam. Code, div. 9, pt. 2, ch. 2, art. 2, §§ 4050 et seq.
[4] Code Civ. Proc., § 685.010.
[5] *See* 42 U.S.C. §§ 654(20)(A), 666(16).
[6] *See* Sen. Com. on Judiciary, Analysis of Sen. Bill No. 1055 (2021-2022 Reg. Sess.) as amended Mar. 24, 2022, p. 6.
[7] *Ibid.*; *see also* Fam. Code, § 17520.
[8] Fam. Code, § 17520.5.

After SB 1055 took effect, the Orange County LCSA found that child support collections *increased* with fewer license suspensions.[9] As Veronica McNamara, the Deputy Director of the Program Support Services in Orange County explains:

> Customers with a valid driver's license are more likely to become and stay employed. This is consistent with our initial data analysis, indicating that license suspension as an enforcement tool was not yielding the expected outcome of increasing collections for families. Furthermore, the resource benefit associated with a 3 percent reduction of the inquiry volume in calls and 9 percent of lobby visitors (annually) translates to reduced administrative workloads for staff, consistent with the work of two full-time caseworkers. SB 1055 allows Orange County to redistribute resources across other units in the agency that are cost-effective, yield positive impacts on performance, and improve customer service.[10]

3. <u>This bill expands SB 1055 to all license types and establishes a process for an LCSA to verify whether a parent falls below the income threshold for suspension</u>

California law still requires the suspension of any license other than a driver's license—including a bar license, medical license, or other professional license—when the parent is in arrears on child support payments, regardless of the parent's income level.[11] According to information provided by the author, most of the state's licensure suspensions are in lower-earning fields, such as security, barbering and cosmetology, teaching, and vocational nursing. As with driver's license suspension, suspending a parent's professional license for failure to pay child support seems self-evidently counterproductive—a parent can't earn enough money to pay their child support if the state takes away the license they need to earn money. Moreover, because California's interest rate is so high, unpaid child support obligation can quickly mount into insurmountable debt; the state has a clear interest in avoiding pushing parents into the financial abyss.

To avoid these perverse results, this bill extends SB 1055's license suspension prohibition for low-income parents to all license types and establishes the procedure through which an LCSA determines whether a parent is below 70 percent of the median household income for the county. For the first year after the entry of the support order, the court's determination of the parent's income for purposes of the order dictates the parent's eligibility for licensure suspension. After the first year, if a parent becomes in arrears on their child support obligation, the LCSA must send the parent a notice

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[9] Quanbeck, et al., *Balancing Enforcement and Equity: Perspectives on Driver's License Suspensions in Child Support* (Oct. 2025) Child Support CommuniQue, p. 22, *available at* https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/70793632/october-2025-csq/25 (link current as of June 18, 2026).
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Fam. Code, § 17520.

instructing the parent to submit income and employment information so that the LCSA can determine whether the parent's income falls under the 70 percent line. The notice must include specified contact information for the LCSA and the parent's caseworker.

If the parent submits their income and employment information within 30 days of receiving the notice and establishes that their income is at or below 70 percent of the area median, the parent's name cannot be included on the list of names circulated for license suspension. If, however, the documentation establishes that the parent is over 70 percent of the area median, or the parent fails to timely submit their documentation, the parent's income is presumed to meet the threshold for suspension of any license except a noncommercial driver's license. The presumption also may not be applied if the notice was returned as undeliverable. A parent can appeal a determination that their income is above the 70 percent floor, or the application of the presumption as the result of untimely document submission, through existing administrative and judicial review procedures.

The process for verifying the parent's income was negotiated with the Child Support Directors Association (CSDA). The CSDA and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors removed their opposition to the bill in response to the amendments implementing the verification process.

4. <u>Arguments in support</u>

According to the Coalition of Child Welfare Rights Organizations:

> Current law requires occupational boards, upon receiving a list of names from the Department of Child Support Services, to initiate the process to deny or suspend licenses of any parent who is behind in making child support payments, regardless of any other circumstances. AB 2195 will end the overbroad and punitive impact of existing law, and will re-form an ineffective, costly and administratively burdensome requirement that creates distrust between parents and the child support system, undermining the state's goal of im-proving the well-being of children and families.
>
> This bill is modeled on the successful passage of SB 1055 (Kamlager) in 2022 which limited driver's license suspensions as an enforcement action for unpaid child support to cases where parents' income was above 70% of the Area Median Income (AMI). An Orange County evaluation of SB 1055 found that after implementing SB 1055, Orange County's child support agency experienced no significant impact on collections—in fact, collections increased. Additionally, limiting license suspensions to parents resulted in significant administrative savings for the county agency, equal to two full time case workers. California has other more effective tools to collect child support, such as wage garnishments and tax refund offsets.

> Interfering with a parent's ability to earn income by suspending their occupational li-cense, hamper's their ability to pay child support. It is time to end this policy which does not support children and families.
>
> Recent amendments to AB 2195 balance accountability and equity by adding a process for local child support agencies to engage parents who have fallen behind by first sending them a notice and asking them to verify their income. If the parent fails to verify their income, they will be presumed to be above the 70% income threshold, and their license will be suspended until they fulfill the verification requirements.

SUPPORT

Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations (co-sponsor)
End Child Poverty California Powered by Grace (co-sponsor)
Western Center on Law & Poverty (co-sponsor)
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
Legal Services for Prisoners With Children
Legal Services of Northern California
Truth and Justice in Child Support Coalition
University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law Homeless Advocacy Clinic
Young Community Developers

OPPOSITION

None received[12]

RELATED LEGISLATION

Pending legislation:

AB 2395 (Sharp-Collins, 2026) requires DCSS to take steps to ensure that the statewide compromise of arrears program (COAP) for past-due child support is administered consistently throughout the state and by LCSAs, and modifies some of the COAP eligibility conditions. AB 2395 is pending before this Committee and is set to be heard on the same date as this bill.

AB 1643 (Nguyen, 2026) requires the court to order that child support payments be directed to the State Disbursement Unit in every case and requires that every court order for payment of child support be deemed an application for child support enforcement services unless the support obligee opts out. AB 1643 is pending before the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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[12] Entitles that were opposed to the bill removed their opposition following the author's most recent amendments.

Prior legislation:

SB 618 (Rubio, 2023) would have prohibited DCSS or an LCSA from collecting interest that has accrued on child support owed to the state or the county and eliminated interest on child support owed or assigned to the state or the county going forward. SB 618 died in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 1055 (Kamlager, Ch. 830, Stats. 2022) prohibited DCSS from including in the list of support obligors in arrears sent to the DMV, for the purpose of denying, withholding, or suspending a driver's license, any obligor whose annual household income is at or below 70 percent of the median income for the county in which the obligor resides; beginning January 1, 2027, this restriction is applicable only to noncommercial drivers licenses. SB 1055 is discussed further in Comment 2 of this analysis.

PRIOR VOTES

Assembly Floor (Ayes 56, Noes 19)
Assembly Appropriations Committee (Ayes 11, Noes 3)
Assembly Business and Professions Committee (Ayes 12, Noes 6)
Assembly Judiciary Committee (Ayes 9, Noes 3)

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