

Illinois Governor successfully collects child support from parents seeking hunting and fishing licenses

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Denying the hunting and fishing licenses of deadbeat parents has proven to be an effective incentive to getting some parents in Illinois to pay child support, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich announced on Oct. 28, 2008.

September marks one year since the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) teamed up with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to deny hunting and fishing licenses from parents who are not paying child support. In its first year, the program has resulted in approximately \$263,506 of child support being collected for Illinois families.

“Parents who deny their children the financial support they need and deserve should not be able to enjoy leisurely hours spent hunting and fishing at the expense of their child’s well-being,” said Governor Blagojevich. “In Illinois, if parents do not meet their obligations to their children, we will deny them the permits they need for their own recreation.”

Technology administered through IDNR allows HFS to crosscheck the names of child support violators with everyone in Illinois who applies for a hunting or fishing license. If an applicant owes unpaid child support, he or she may not be issued a license.

“I am proud that by working with our colleagues at the Department of Natural Resources, we have been able [to] collect hundreds of thousands of dollars for Illinois families. The success of this program contributed to our Department collecting a record \$1.33 billion dollars in child support during the last fiscal year,” said HFS Director Barry S. Maram. “Though most parents do provide financial support for their children, this program is reminding those who do not that there will be consequences until they start paying child support.”

“Hunting and fishing are privileges,” said IDNR Acting Director Sam Flood. “We want people to enjoy outdoor sports in Illinois, but we cannot, in good conscience, allow people to spend money for self enjoyment before taking care of their financial obligations to their children.”

As a result of the program, Suzanne Jackson, a single mother residing in Collinsville, was able to receive child support from the father of her child, which helped her buy necessities like clothing and food.

“I think it’s a great program. If my child’s father had not tried to renew his fishing license, I believe to this day that he would still owe that money. I think it’s a great thing that the Department is doing. I really did not think that I would ever see the money, and that money is for my child,” said Ms. Jackson.

As a result of Governor Blagojevich’s introduction of innovative methods to collect child support from non-custodial parents, fiscal year 2008 was the fourth consecutive year of record child support collections in Illinois. In addition to denying hunting and fishing licenses, the Governor announced a program to suspend driver’s licenses from parents who do not pay child support. HFS is working with Secretary of State Jesse White’s office to suspend the driver’s licenses of parents who owe unpaid child support and who, after receiving a warning notice from HFS, do not begin making payments.

For more information, visit the State of Illinois Web site: <http://www.illinois.gov/>