

HCS HB 1047 -- NONCUSTODIAL PARENT STATE DEBT (Zerr)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Children and Families

This bill changes the laws regarding state debt owed by noncustodial parents. The bill requires the Department of Social Services to establish a pilot program to allow noncustodial parents to reduce the amount of state debt owed based on the number of hours of participation in the program. The amount of state debt must not be reduced by more than \$2,000. The program must not change the noncustodial parent's monthly child support obligations or compromise any arrears owed to the custodial parent or any spousal support arrears. The goals of the program must include empowering the noncustodial parents with the necessary resources to achieve gainful employment and encouraging noncustodial parents to be engaged with their children and to take financial responsibility for their children's well-being. A noncustodial parent must be removed from the program if at any time the department determines that he or she is not demonstrating good faith efforts to achieve these goals, must not receive a reduction in the amount of state debt owed, and must not be allowed to reenter the program. Eligible noncustodial parents who participate in the pilot program and who continually demonstrate good faith efforts to achieve the program's goals must not be subject to prosecution for criminal nonsupport during participation in the program and for a year following completion of the program.

The department must establish rules and regulations implementing the provisions of the bill within 180 days of the bill's effective date, and the department must submit a report to the General Assembly one year following the establishment of rules that includes information as specified in the bill.

The provisions of the bill will expire on August 28, 2018.