Legal Actions to Enforce Child Support

California's Child Support Program: A Resource for Parents

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) uses a variety of legal actions to enforce court ordered child support. These legal actions are governed by California law and help to ensure timely and consistent child support payments. After a court order is established setting a child support amount, legal actions used by DCSS to enforce the child support order may include the following:

- **Income Withholding Order or Wage Assignment**
  After the amount of child support is set by a court order a wage assignment will be sent to your employer with instructions detailing how much child support to deduct from your wages and where to send the payment. Income withholding orders can also be used to withhold your child support from other types of income such as Worker's Compensation payments.

- **Worker's Compensation Award Lien**
  If you were injured on the job and have an active Worker's Compensation Appeals Board claim, a lien may be filed to obtain a portion of your final award to pay your child support obligation from the date of your injury.

- **Real Property Lien**
  A real property lien prevents the sale or refinancing of your property until a payment on past due child support is made. Real property liens may be recorded in the county where you reside or where you may inherit property.

- **Order for Appearance and Examination**
  If you fall behind on your child support obligation, DCSS may request a detailed look at your personal finances. You will be asked to provide information on your income, assets, and expenses at a court hearing. Modification of your child support payment obligation may occur once the examination process is completed.

- **Writ of Execution**
  A Writ of Execution is an order issued by a court that allows DCSS to seize your assets to pay your child support obligation. The seized personal or real estate property will be sold at an auction and money received from the sale will be applied to the child support arrears you owe.

- **Civil Contempt**
  If you fail to make your child support payments as court ordered, contempt of court proceedings may be initiated. The contempt process holds you accountable to the terms of your court order. A count of contempt can be charged for each month a child support payment is not made and may result in jail time.

For more information, contact your local child support office: 1 (866) 901-3212 **or TTY:** 1 (866) 399-4096
https://childsupport.ca.gov/

Child Support Directors Association
A Coalition of Experts Collecting Billions for California's Children

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2150 River Plaza Dr Ste 420 Sacramento, CA 95833
www.csda.org | (916) 446-6700