

LAW OFFICE OF
SUSAN CASTLETON RYAN, P.C.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND CHILD SUPPORT

by Melaney G. Hodge, Esq.

The enactment of the Massachusetts Child Support Enforcement Act, M.G.L.A. c. 119A and as amended, conveyed broad powers on the Department of Child Support Enforcement Division (hereinafter referred to as “DOR”), enabling DOR to establish and enforce child support orders and/or a medical insurance order in any pending action for divorce, separate support, paternity, or proceeding regarding a child in need. Upon request from either parent, DOR will also assist in reviewing child support orders for modification, and will process any and all modifications of support orders. However, DOR cannot get involved in any visitation, custody, or property settlement issues, or establish or modify orders for payment of tuition unless the court order establishes the exact amount due.

DOR has several administrative remedies available to collect any past due child support. Those remedies include adding an additional twenty-five (25%) to the weekly support order, seizing any bank account or tax refunds, and suspending the payor’s driver’s license. DOR does not need court permission to impose any of these sanctions, provided the arrearages reach a specified amount.

For parents receiving child support, DOR is a very useful tool. There is typically a few weeks delay from which DOR services are implemented and the parent actually receives the support. However, that temporary delay is well worth the future benefits and peace of mind. Services through DOR may be requested at any time, by filing an application for same. You do not need to go to court in order for DOR to collect your support.

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