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CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT ACT PASSES SENATE- KANSAS SENATORS SAY DODGING PAYMENTS NO LONGER TOLERATED

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senators Bob Dole and Nancy Kassebaum said Wednesday that the unanimous Senate vote for the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984 will send a signal to the nation's parents who dodge child support payments that such practices will no longer be tolerated.

The bill, co-sponsored and spirited by the Kansas Senators, is expected to dramatically improve enforcement of child support payments now due more than four million American children and their mothers who currently do not receive legally-owed support.

"There's no way we can continue to tolerate or excuse the ever-rising numbers of parents who skip out on their obligations to support their children. We're pleased to advance this Act on behalf of the millions of neglected mothers and their children across this nation," Senators Dole and Kassebaum said.

The bill includes the important mandatory enforcement procedures which were contained in the House and Senate versions as well as the Administration bill, the Senators pointed out. Those procedures include mandatory income withholding after an arrearage of one month, the imposition of liens on property, the requirement that a bond be secured in certain cases, consumer credit agency reporting and the intercept and offset of state income tax refunds for child support cases, the Senators explained.

Another feature of the bill extends the current federal income tax offset used for welfare cases to nonwelfare cases. Under this offset procedure, the tax refunds of delinquent parents can be intercepted and past-due child support deducted.

"The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement estimates that, in its first year of implementation, the offset will affect some 800,000 taxpayers," Dole and Kassebaum said. "Ultimately, the provision could affect upwards of two million tax returns. This should prove to be an important collection tool for the program."

The Kansas Senators noted the landmark legislation, which will devote an additional \$200 million in federal funds to the program, was not developed without extensive hearings and study. Dole's Committee on Finance first held hearings on the subject in September 1983 and again in January 1984.

"For example," Dole and Kassebaum said, "as of spring 1982, 8.4 million women were living with a child under 21 years of age whose father was not present in the house. Only 59 percent of these women were even awarded child support payments. In fact, between 1978 and 1981, child support payments decreased by about 16 percent in real terms."