



TJCS Celebrates Full Passthrough of Child Support to Former CalWORKs Families

Beginning this month, California will pass through 100% of child support payments to families who formerly received CalWORKs benefits, putting \$160 million back in the pockets of low-income families.

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This month, California stopped intercepting child support payments intended for families who formerly received CalWORKs benefits. As a result, an estimated \$160 million per year will go to families and children, instead of being kept by the government to reimburse itself for providing public benefits to custodial parents in the past. With this policy change, California becomes a national leader, joining a small handful of states that have taken similar actions to end the practice of seizing child support payments from low-income children and families. The state's action is in response to years of advocacy from the Truth and Justice in Child Support Coalition and others.

The Truth and Justice in Child Support Coalition applauds this policy win, but there is still much more work to do. The state continues to intercept approximately \$150 million each year from low-income families that currently receive CalWORKs rather than sending the money directly to parents and children who need it. Additionally, struggling families are saddled with \$6.4 billion in debt to the government for past-due child support while their families are receiving public benefits and accruing a 10% interest rate, which is one of the highest rates in the country.

We ask the Legislature and Governor to keep up the momentum and continue to position California's child support program as a truly family-centered, poverty-alleviation program. Specifically, we ask that they:

1. Plan for the 100% passthrough of child support to families currently receiving CalWORKs;
2. Provide debt relief for old and uncollectible child support debt owed by low-income parents to the State for past due child support while their families were receiving public benefits; and
3. Eliminate the egregious 10% interest rate on government-owed child support debt.

These child support issues are racial and economic justice issues; passing these policy priorities can help get families out of debt and towards economic security with relatively little cost to the state in a difficult budget year. Moreover, the California Reparations Task Force recommends the elimination of interest on past-due child support and recommends eliminating child support debt to address the harms created by the government's pathologizing of Black families. We urge the legislature and the Governor to make amends by supporting families that need it most.

The [Truth and Justice in Child Support Coalition](https://truthandjusticeinchildsupport.org) is a statewide coalition of organizations that seeks to change state policy on child support pass-through, payments, and collections to better support low-income children and their families and reduce child poverty in California. Contact us at info@truthandjusticeinchildsupport.org for additional information.