

**Testimony on SB 964 and SB 1147**

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**pennsylvania**

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Good morning Chairmen Folmer and Wozniak, committee members and staff. My name is Daniel Richard. I am the Director of the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement for the Department of Public Welfare. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Senate Bills 964 and 1147.

### **Child Support Enforcement Program**

I am pleased to inform you that Pennsylvania's Child Support Enforcement Program is the number one performing child support enforcement program in the nation. Pennsylvania meets and exceeds all federal standards of performance - the first state in the 35 year history of the Federal Child Support Enforcement Program to achieve that status. In federal Fiscal Year 2008-2009, Pennsylvania collected \$1.6 billion in child support. Of that amount, \$1.36 billion was collected through electronic interfaces with governmental and private sector entities on behalf of 626,000 Pennsylvania children.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 requires state child support enforcement programs to collect an individual's Social Security number on applications for a professional or occupational license or certificate, a permit, driver's license, marriage license, or recreational license. The Bureau of Child Support Enforcement maintains the Social Security number in the Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System, using it to enforce unpaid child support obligations through various enforcement remedies including suspension or denial of drivers' licenses, professional/occupational licenses, and recreational licenses as further required by federal and state law.

The federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 vastly expanded the nature, number, and scope of enforcement remedies available to the states and the courts to ensure that child support represents a consistent, reliable source of income to

families. Although the effectiveness of any particular enforcement remedy is contingent upon the circumstances of the parties in a child support case, together, the federal intent is to ensure that at least one remedy or enforcement mechanism will work in every case – hence the denial, revocation or suspension of recreational licenses. Use of this remedy will enable the department to further increase its effectiveness in collecting child support from specific groups of non-custodial parents. By analogy, we expect to collect about \$70 million in child support in state fiscal year 2009-2010 using the suspension of driver’s license remedy alone, which has been in place for about ten years.

**Department Position on Senate Bills 964 and 1147**

The department is neutral regarding Senate Bills 964 and 1147. As you know, Senate Bill 964 establishes an effective date for the required collection of an alternate identifier, a driver’s license or non-driver’s identification card number, as required by Act 160 of 2006. The Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement Program already has the capability to collect alternate identifying numbers as defined by Act 160.

Senate Bill 1147 establishes that commonwealth agencies and municipalities do not have to provide application and renewal forms when license applications and renewals are completed on an electronic application, alternate identifiers may be collected electronically, and persons who provide an alternate identifier to a Social Security number are deemed to have given consent to the Department of Transportation to release their Social Security number to a commonwealth agency or municipality. The legislation indirectly impacts business operations of Pennsylvania’s Child Support Enforcement Program.

The electronic application and renewal procedures provided for in Senate Bill 1147 eliminates the use of paper forms, reduces operational costs, improves the efficiency of the

license application, and facilitates the federally-required data matching processes. More importantly, electronic licensing processes effectively address the privacy concerns raised by individuals who purchase recreational licenses. Confidentiality is of paramount concern when establishing or enforcing child support obligations due to the sensitive nature of the personal information maintained on our system. The Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System is programmed to collect an individual's driver's license or nondriver's identification card number and, through established protocols with the Department of Transportation, convert and collaterally store the social security number. Electronic application processing will further enhance the confidentiality measures already built into the system. Stringent safeguards have always been in place to ensure that all actions processed by the Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System remain confidential and impervious to extraneous intrusion.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding Senate Bills 964 and 1147. I will take any questions you may have at this time.