

# **Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act**

Problems arise where a parent and a child do not reside in the same state. To deal with jurisdictional problems in establishing and enforcing child support obligations, the federal government enacted the Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act in the 1950s. Although it has been mostly replaced by the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act, enacted in 1998, URESA still applies in some situations.

## **Provisions of URESA**

Under URESA and revisions to it, known as RURESAs, if a parent moves out of the jurisdiction of the court which first establishes a child support obligation, the court in the new state has authority to enforce the child support orders. URESA is a procedural statute which provides for enforcement of preexisting orders. The court with jurisdiction over the absent parent may consider the amount of obligation de novo or it may modify the amount. In either case, the new court will use the standards of support and laws of the new state in calculating the amount of support due. While a private party may bring an action to collect child support under the Act, actions are most often brought by state agencies responsible for child support enforcement. URESA only discusses the jurisdiction of courts to establish, modify, and collect child support. It does not address the state agencies and administrative judges which have similar powers. URESA also does not address child custody and visitation matters.

## **Procedures**

URESAs provides a two-state procedure to enforce a child support obligation on a parent who resides in a state other than the state in which the child resides. The first state establishes the duty to support. When this court lacks jurisdiction over an absent parent, a request for enforcement is sent to the state which has jurisdiction, the responding state. The responding state then becomes responsible for collecting the child support and forwarding the funds collected to the state agency responsible for child support enforcement in the state where the child lives. The child support obligations established under URESA or RURESAs are still subject to its provisions.