



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for
Children and Families

2201 Sixth Avenue, BX-70
Seattle, WA 98121

FEB - 3 2005

S. Ray L. Weaver, Director
Division of Child Support
Dept. Of Social and Health Services
Olympia, WA 98507-9162

Dear Mr. Weaver:

Pursuant to 45 CFR 301.13, Region 10 Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has reviewed the Washington State child support state plan. ACF Region 10 finds that Washington's state plan may no longer be approvable without appropriate attention to its child support guidelines.

ACF Region 10 has been concerned for several years about the state's child support guidelines, which are required by 45 CFR. 302.56 (d & e) to be part of the state plan and reviewed and revised if appropriate at least once every 4 years. After initiating discussions with Washington State Division of Child Support, we were assured that the guidelines would be reviewed and revised. However, it appears that the guidelines have not been reviewed and revised if appropriate. We are concerned that the state did not meet the requirements of 45 CFR 302.56 (h), in conducting their review. Among other requirements in this regulation, the state did not consider economic data on the costs of raising a child. It is our understanding that the economic data has not been updated since 1991 and there have been no revisions to the guidelines since 1991 as well.

Because of the state's failure to review and revise the guidelines if appropriate, we are notifying the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) central office of our recommendation to disapprove the Washington State child support plan. If OCSE agrees with our recommendation to disapprove the state plan, they will issue a "notice of intent to disapprove the state plan." At that time, the state will be able to request a reconsideration under 45 CFR 301.14.

As you know, a determination that a state child support plan is disapproved will result in immediate suspension of all Federal payments for the state's child support enforcement program, and such payments will continue to be withheld until the state child support plan can be approved by OCSE. In addition, in order to be eligible for a block grant for

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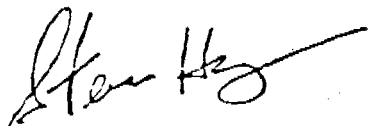
DSHS/DIV OF CHILD SUPPORT

Page 2 - S. Ray L. Weaver

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), section 402 (a) (2) of the Social Security Act requires a state to certify that it will operate a child support enforcement program under an approved state child support plan. Therefore, TANF funding may also be jeopardized if the state fails to correct this problem in a timely basis.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Henigson", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Steve Henigson
Regional Administrator