



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Two bills to support Oregon parents pass the Senate

SB 373 relates to timely child support payments; SB 313 addresses evidentiary privilege between parents and minor children

SALEM – Two bills that help Oregon parents deal with tough circumstances passed the Oregon Senate this morning. Senate Bill 373 gives recourse to parents who have their wages garnished for child support when their employer fails to turn over those wages to the state in a timely manner. Senate Bill 313 establishes that the relationship between a parent and a minor child is privileged and that a parent cannot be compelled to testify against their minor child.

“SB 373 ensures that responsible parents have recourse if their employers withhold but fail to deliver child support on their behalf,” said Senator Suzanne Bonamici (D-NW Portland/Washington Co), chair of Senate Consumer Protection and Public Affairs Committee. “Most importantly, it will help ensure that child support money reaches the custodial parent and the child in a timely manner.”

Bonamici was compelled to introduce SB 373 after working with a constituent who found his wages garnished but the funds not delivered to his child, thereby causing hardship to the family and damaging his credit. His employer admitted using the garnished wages to help with cash flow problems, but the constituent had no recourse. SB 373 clarifies that employers are liable for damages if they withhold but fail to pay child support.

Another piece of legislation passed today grants parents the right to refuse to testify against their minor children. Already included in the list of privileged relationships are those between a husband and wife, a client and lawyer, a patient and their doctor, and clients and counselors, among others.

“Senate Bill 313 is a logical addition to the list of relationships that are already considered privileged by the state,” said Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. “Children should be able to share in confidence with their parents if something regrettable happens and parents should not have to worry about being forced to go and testify against their child.”

Both pieces of legislation will now go to the House for consideration.

“The legislation we passed today addresses fairly specific circumstances that parents could encounter,” said Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin (D-Tualatin). “The issues that prompted our action were hurdles to common sense parenting. These are reasonable bills that look out for both parents and their children.”

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