

1-1 By: Cook, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Johnson) H.B. No. 2524
 1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 8, 2025;
 1-3 May 9, 2025, read first time and referred to Committee on
 1-4 Jurisprudence; May 22, 2025, reported favorably by the following
 1-5 vote: Yeas 4, Nays 0; May 22, 2025, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7 Hughes	X			
1-8 Johnson	X			
1-9 Creighton			X	
1-10 Hinojosa of Hidalgo	X			
1-11 Middleton	X			

1-13 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
 1-14 AN ACT

1-15 relating to the recovery of fees, court costs, and expenses in
 1-16 family law proceedings.

1-17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-18 SECTION 1. Section 6.502(a), Family Code, is amended to
 1-19 read as follows:

1-20 (a) While a suit for dissolution of a marriage is pending
 1-21 and on the motion of a party or on the court's own motion after
 1-22 notice and hearing, the court may render an appropriate order,
 1-23 including the granting of a temporary injunction for the
 1-24 preservation of the property and protection of the parties as
 1-25 deemed necessary and equitable and including an order directed to
 1-26 one or both parties:

1-27 (1) requiring a sworn inventory and appraisal of
 1-28 the real and personal property owned or claimed by the parties and
 1-29 specifying the form, manner, and substance of the inventory and
 1-30 appraisal and list of debts and liabilities;

1-31 (2) requiring payments to be made for the support of
 1-32 either spouse;

1-33 (3) requiring the production of books, papers,
 1-34 documents, and tangible things by a party;

1-35 (4) ordering payment of reasonable and necessary
 1-36 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses;

1-37 (5) appointing a receiver for the preservation and
 1-38 protection of the property of the parties;

1-39 (6) awarding one spouse exclusive occupancy of the
 1-40 residence during the pendency of the case;

1-41 (7) prohibiting the parties, or either party, from
 1-42 spending funds beyond an amount the court determines to be for
 1-43 reasonable and necessary living expenses;

1-44 (8) awarding one spouse exclusive control of a party's
 1-45 usual business or occupation; or

1-46 (9) prohibiting an act described by Section 6.501(a).

1-47 SECTION 2. The heading to Section 6.708, Family Code, is
 1-48 amended to read as follows:

1-49 Sec. 6.708. [~~COSTS,~~] ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND
 1-50 EXPENSES.

1-51 SECTION 3. Section 6.708(c), Family Code, is amended to
 1-52 read as follows:

1-53 (c) In a suit for dissolution of a marriage, the court may
 1-54 award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and
 1-55 expenses. The court may order the fees, costs, [~~and~~] expenses, and
 1-56 any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who
 1-57 may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means
 1-58 available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

1-59 SECTION 4. Section 6.709(a), Family Code, is amended to
 1-60 read as follows:

1-61 (a) In a suit for dissolution of a marriage, on the motion of

2-1 a party or on the court's own motion, after notice and hearing, the
 2-2 trial court may render a temporary order as considered equitable
 2-3 and necessary for the preservation of the property and for the
 2-4 protection of the parties during an appeal, including an order
 2-5 directed toward one or both parties:

- 2-6 (1) requiring the support of either spouse;
- 2-7 (2) requiring the payment of reasonable and necessary
- 2-8 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses;
- 2-9 (3) appointing a receiver for the preservation and
- 2-10 protection of the property of the parties;
- 2-11 (4) awarding one spouse exclusive occupancy of the
- 2-12 parties' residence pending the appeal;
- 2-13 (5) enjoining a party from dissipating or transferring
- 2-14 the property awarded to the other party in the trial court's
- 2-15 property division; or
- 2-16 (6) suspending the operation of all or part of the
- 2-17 property division that is being appealed.

2-18 SECTION 5. Section 8.0591(b), Family Code, is amended to
 2-19 read as follows:

2-20 (b) An obligor may file a suit to recover overpaid
 2-21 maintenance under Subsection (a). If the court finds that the
 2-22 obligee failed to return overpaid maintenance under Subsection (a),
 2-23 the court shall order the obligee to pay the obligor's reasonable
 2-24 and necessary attorney's fees, [and all] court costs, and expenses
 2-25 in addition to the amount of the overpaid maintenance. For good
 2-26 cause shown, the court may waive the requirement that the obligee
 2-27 pay attorney's fees, [and] court costs, and expenses if the court
 2-28 states in its order the reasons supporting that finding.

2-29 SECTION 6. Subchapter B, Chapter 8, Family Code, is amended
 2-30 by adding Section 8.063 to read as follows:

2-31 Sec. 8.063. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES. In
 2-32 a proceeding under Section 8.056, 8.057, or 8.059, the court may
 2-33 award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and
 2-34 expenses incurred by a party to the divorce or annulment. The court
 2-35 may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest
 2-36 to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in
 2-37 the attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement
 2-38 of a judgment for debt.

2-39 SECTION 7. Section 8.206, Family Code, is amended by
 2-40 amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (d) to read as
 2-41 follows:

2-42 (b) An employer who receives, but does not comply with, an
 2-43 order or writ of withholding is liable to:

- 2-44 (1) the obligee for any amount of spousal maintenance
- 2-45 not paid in compliance with the order or writ;
- 2-46 (2) the obligor for any amount withheld from the
- 2-47 obligor's disposable earnings, but not remitted to the obligee; and
- 2-48 (3) the obligee or obligor for reasonable and
- 2-49 necessary attorney's fees, [and] court costs, and expenses incurred
- 2-50 in recovering an amount described by Subdivision (1) or (2).

2-51 (d) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any
 2-52 postjudgment interest under Subsection (b)(3) to be paid directly
 2-53 to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own
 2-54 name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for
 2-55 debt.

2-56 SECTION 8. Section 8.208(c), Family Code, is amended to
 2-57 read as follows:

2-58 (c) An employer who intentionally discharges an employee in
 2-59 violation of this section is liable to that employee for current
 2-60 wages, other employment benefits, and reasonable and necessary
 2-61 attorney's fees, [and] court costs, and expenses incurred in
 2-62 enforcing the employee's rights. The court may order the fees,
 2-63 costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly
 2-64 to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own
 2-65 name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for
 2-66 debt.

2-67 SECTION 9. Section 8.357, Family Code, is amended to read as
 2-68 follows:

2-69 Sec. 8.357. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT [AND] COSTS, AND

3-1 EXPENSES. (a) In a proceeding under this subchapter, the court
 3-2 may order the obligor to pay reasonable and necessary attorney's
 3-3 fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by a party to obtain the
 3-4 order~~[, all court costs,]~~ and all fees charged by a plan
 3-5 administrator for the qualified domestic relations order or similar
 3-6 order.

3-7 (b) Fees, ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses ordered under this
 3-8 section may be enforced by any means available for the enforcement
 3-9 of a judgment for debt.

3-10 SECTION 10. Section 9.014, Family Code, is amended to read
 3-11 as follows:

3-12 Sec. 9.014. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND
 3-13 EXPENSES. The court may award reasonable and necessary attorney's
 3-14 fees, court costs, and expenses in a proceeding under this
 3-15 subchapter. The court may order the attorney's fees, court costs,
 3-16 and expenses to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce
 3-17 the order ~~[for fees]~~ in the attorney's own name by any means
 3-18 available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

3-19 SECTION 11. Section 9.106, Family Code, is amended to read
 3-20 as follows:

3-21 Sec. 9.106. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES. In
 3-22 a proceeding under this subchapter, the court may award reasonable
 3-23 and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred
 3-24 by a party to a divorce or annulment against the other party to the
 3-25 divorce or annulment. The court may order the attorney's fees,
 3-26 court costs, and expenses to be paid directly to the attorney, who
 3-27 may enforce the order ~~[for fees]~~ in the attorney's own name by any
 3-28 means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

3-29 SECTION 12. Section 9.205, Family Code, is amended to read
 3-30 as follows:

3-31 Sec. 9.205. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES. In
 3-32 a proceeding to divide property previously undivided in a decree of
 3-33 divorce or annulment as provided by this subchapter, the court may
 3-34 award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and
 3-35 expenses. The court may order the attorney's fees, court costs,
 3-36 and expenses to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce
 3-37 the order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the
 3-38 enforcement of a judgment for debt.

3-39 SECTION 13. Section 41.002, Family Code, is amended to read
 3-40 as follows:

3-41 Sec. 41.002. LIMIT OF DAMAGES. Recovery for damage caused
 3-42 by wilful and malicious conduct is limited to actual damages, not to
 3-43 exceed \$25,000 per occurrence, plus reasonable and necessary
 3-44 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses ~~[reasonable attorney's~~
 3-45 ~~fees]~~.

3-46 SECTION 14. Section 41.0025(a), Family Code, is amended to
 3-47 read as follows:

3-48 (a) Notwithstanding Section 41.002, recovery of damages by
 3-49 an inn or hotel for wilful and malicious conduct is limited to
 3-50 actual damages, not to exceed \$25,000 per occurrence, plus
 3-51 reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses
 3-52 ~~[reasonable attorney's fees]~~.

3-53 SECTION 15. Section 42.006(a), Family Code, is amended to
 3-54 read as follows:

3-55 (a) Damages may include:

3-56 (1) reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court
 3-57 ~~[the actual]~~ costs, and expenses incurred~~[, including attorney's~~
 3-58 ~~fees,]~~ in:

3-59 (A) locating a child who is the subject of the
 3-60 order;

3-61 (B) recovering possession of the child if the
 3-62 petitioner is entitled to possession; and

3-63 (C) enforcing the order and prosecuting the suit;
 3-64 and

3-65 (2) mental suffering and anguish incurred by the
 3-66 plaintiff because of a violation of the order.

3-67 SECTION 16. Section 42.009, Family Code, is amended to read
 3-68 as follows:

3-69 Sec. 42.009. FRIVOLOUS SUIT. A person sued for damages as

4-1 provided by this chapter is entitled to recover reasonable and
4-2 necessary attorney's fees, [and] court costs, and expenses if:

4-3 (1) the claim for damages is dismissed or judgment is
4-4 awarded to the defendant; and

4-5 (2) the court or jury finds that the claim for damages
4-6 is frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation.

4-7 SECTION 17. The heading to Section 81.005, Family Code, is
4-8 amended to read as follows:

4-9 Sec. 81.005. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

4-10 SECTION 18. Section 81.005(a), Family Code, is amended to
4-11 read as follows:

4-12 (a) The court may assess reasonable and necessary
4-13 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses against the party found
4-14 to have committed family violence or a party against whom an agreed
4-15 protective order is rendered under Section 85.005 as compensation
4-16 for the services of a private or prosecuting attorney or an attorney
4-17 employed by the Department of Family and Protective Services. The
4-18 court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment
4-19 interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the
4-20 order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the
4-21 enforcement of a judgment for debt.

4-22 SECTION 19. Section 105.001(a), Family Code, is amended to
4-23 read as follows:

4-24 (a) In a suit, the court may make a temporary order,
4-25 including the modification of a prior temporary order, for the
4-26 safety and welfare of the child, including an order:

4-27 (1) for the temporary conservatorship of the child;

4-28 (2) for the temporary support of the child;

4-29 (3) restraining a party from disturbing the peace of
4-30 the child or another party;

4-31 (4) prohibiting a person from removing the child
4-32 beyond a geographical area identified by the court; or

4-33 (5) for payment of reasonable and necessary attorney's
4-34 fees, court costs, and expenses.

4-35 SECTION 20. Section 106.002, Family Code, is amended to
4-36 read as follows:

4-37 Sec. 106.002. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND
4-38 EXPENSES. (a) In a suit or motion under this title and in a habeas
4-39 corpus proceeding, the court may render judgment for reasonable and
4-40 necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses and order the
4-41 judgment and postjudgment interest to be paid directly to an
4-42 attorney.

4-43 (b) A judgment for attorney's fees, court costs, and
4-44 expenses may be enforced in the attorney's name by any means
4-45 available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

4-46 SECTION 21. Section 107.023, Family Code, is amended to
4-47 read as follows:

4-48 Sec. 107.023. FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES IN SUITS
4-49 OTHER THAN SUITS BY GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY. (a) In a suit other than
4-50 a suit filed by a governmental entity requesting termination of the
4-51 parent-child relationship or appointment of the entity as
4-52 conservator of the child, in addition to the attorney's fees that
4-53 may be awarded under Chapter 106, the following persons are
4-54 entitled to reasonable and necessary fees, court costs, and
4-55 expenses in an amount set by the court and ordered to be paid by one
4-56 or more parties to the suit:

4-57 (1) an attorney appointed as an amicus attorney or as
4-58 an attorney ad litem for the child; and

4-59 (2) a professional who holds a relevant professional
4-60 license and who is appointed as guardian ad litem for the child,
4-61 other than a volunteer advocate.

4-62 (b) The court shall:

4-63 (1) determine the fees, costs, and expenses of an
4-64 amicus attorney, an attorney ad litem, or a guardian ad litem by
4-65 reference to the reasonable and customary fees for similar services
4-66 in the county of jurisdiction;

4-67 (2) order a reasonable cost deposit to be made at the
4-68 time the court makes the appointment; and

4-69 (3) before the final hearing, order an additional

5-1 amount to be paid to the credit of a trust account for the use and
5-2 benefit of the amicus attorney, attorney ad litem, or guardian ad
5-3 litem.

5-4 (c) A court may not award [~~costs,~~] fees, costs, or expenses
5-5 to an amicus attorney, attorney ad litem, or guardian ad litem
5-6 against the state, a state agency, or a political subdivision of the
5-7 state under this part.

5-8 (d) The court may determine that fees, costs, and expenses
5-9 awarded under this subchapter to an amicus attorney, an attorney ad
5-10 litem for the child, or a guardian ad litem for the child are
5-11 necessities for the benefit of the child.

5-12 SECTION 22. Section 109.001(a), Family Code, is amended to
5-13 read as follows:

5-14 (a) In a suit affecting the parent-child relationship, on
5-15 the motion of any party or on the court's own motion and after
5-16 notice and hearing, the court may make any order necessary to
5-17 preserve and protect the safety and welfare of the child during the
5-18 pendency of an appeal as the court may deem necessary and
5-19 equitable. In addition to other matters, an order may:

5-20 (1) appoint temporary conservators for the child and
5-21 provide for possession of the child;

5-22 (2) require the temporary support of the child by a
5-23 party;

5-24 (3) enjoin a party from molesting or disturbing the
5-25 peace of the child or another party;

5-26 (4) prohibit a person from removing the child beyond a
5-27 geographical area identified by the court;

5-28 (5) require payment of reasonable and necessary
5-29 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses; or

5-30 (6) suspend the operation of the order or judgment
5-31 that is being appealed.

5-32 SECTION 23. Section 152.208(c), Family Code, is amended to
5-33 read as follows:

5-34 (c) If a court dismisses a petition or stays a proceeding
5-35 because it declines to exercise its jurisdiction pursuant to
5-36 Subsection (a), it shall assess against the party seeking to invoke
5-37 its jurisdiction [~~necessary and~~] reasonable and necessary
5-38 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses including [~~costs,~~
5-39 communication expenses, [~~attorney's fees,~~ investigative fees,
5-40 expenses for witnesses, travel expenses, and child care during the
5-41 course of the proceedings, unless the party from whom fees are
5-42 sought establishes that the assessment would be clearly
5-43 inappropriate. The court may not assess fees, costs, or expenses
5-44 against this state unless authorized by law other than this
5-45 chapter.

5-46 SECTION 24. The heading to Section 152.312, Family Code, is
5-47 amended to read as follows:

5-48 Sec. 152.312. [~~COSTS,~~] FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

5-49 SECTION 25. Section 152.312(a), Family Code, is amended to
5-50 read as follows:

5-51 (a) The court shall award the prevailing party, including a
5-52 state, [~~necessary and~~] reasonable and necessary attorney's fees,
5-53 court costs, and expenses incurred by or on behalf of the party,
5-54 including [~~costs,~~ communication expenses, [~~attorney's fees,~~
5-55 investigative fees, expenses for witnesses, travel expenses, and
5-56 child care during the course of the proceedings, unless the party
5-57 from whom fees, costs, or expenses are sought establishes that the
5-58 award would be clearly inappropriate. The court may order the fees,
5-59 costs, expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly
5-60 to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own
5-61 name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for
5-62 debt.

5-63 SECTION 26. Section 154.012(b), Family Code, is amended to
5-64 read as follows:

5-65 (b) An obligor may file a suit to recover a child support
5-66 payment under Subsection (a). If the court finds that the obligee
5-67 failed to return a child support payment under Subsection (a), the
5-68 court shall order the obligee to pay to the obligor reasonable and
5-69 necessary attorney's fees, [~~and all~~] court costs, and expenses in

6-1 addition to the amount of support paid after the date the child
 6-2 support order terminated. The court may order the fees, costs,
 6-3 expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the
 6-4 attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by
 6-5 any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt. For
 6-6 good cause shown, the court may waive the requirement that the
 6-7 obligee pay attorney's fees, court ~~and~~ costs, and expenses if the
 6-8 court states the reasons supporting that finding.

6-9 SECTION 27. Section 156.005, Family Code, is amended to
 6-10 read as follows:

6-11 Sec. 156.005. FRIVOLOUS FILING OF SUIT FOR
 6-12 MODIFICATION. Notwithstanding Rules 296 through 299, Texas Rules
 6-13 of Civil Procedure, if the court finds that a suit for modification
 6-14 is filed frivolously or is designed to harass a party, the court
 6-15 shall state that finding in the order and assess reasonable and
 6-16 necessary attorney's fees, court [as] costs, and expenses against
 6-17 the offending party.

6-18 SECTION 28. Section 157.110(c), Family Code, is amended to
 6-19 read as follows:

6-20 (c) The court may order that all or part of the forfeited
 6-21 amount be applied to pay reasonable and necessary attorney's fees,
 6-22 court [and] costs, and expenses incurred by the person or entity
 6-23 bringing the motion for contempt or motion for forfeiture.

6-24 SECTION 29. Section 157.162(b), Family Code, is amended to
 6-25 read as follows:

6-26 (b) A finding that the respondent is not in contempt does
 6-27 not preclude the court from awarding the petitioner court costs and
 6-28 reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses
 6-29 or ordering any other enforcement remedy, including rendering a
 6-30 money judgment, posting a bond or other security, or withholding
 6-31 income. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any
 6-32 postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may
 6-33 enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available
 6-34 for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

6-35 SECTION 30. Section 157.167, Family Code, is amended to
 6-36 read as follows:

6-37 Sec. 157.167. RESPONDENT TO PAY ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT
 6-38 ~~[AND]~~ COSTS, AND EXPENSES. (a) If the court finds that the
 6-39 respondent has failed to make child support payments, the court
 6-40 shall order the respondent to pay the movant's reasonable and
 6-41 necessary attorney's fees, [and all] court costs, and expenses in
 6-42 addition to the arrearages. Fees, [and] costs, and expenses
 6-43 ordered under this subsection may be enforced by any means
 6-44 available for the enforcement of child support, including contempt.
 6-45 The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any postjudgment
 6-46 interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the
 6-47 order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the
 6-48 enforcement of a judgment for debt.

6-49 (b) If the court finds that the respondent has failed to
 6-50 comply with the terms of an order providing for the possession of or
 6-51 access to a child, the court shall order the respondent to pay the
 6-52 movant's reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and all] court
 6-53 costs, and expenses in addition to any other remedy. If the court
 6-54 finds that the enforcement of the order with which the respondent
 6-55 failed to comply was necessary to ensure the child's physical or
 6-56 emotional health or welfare, the fees, ~~and~~ costs, and expenses
 6-57 ordered under this subsection may be enforced by any means
 6-58 available for the enforcement of child support, including contempt,
 6-59 but not including income withholding.

6-60 (c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), for good cause
 6-61 shown, the court may waive the requirement that the respondent pay
 6-62 reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and] costs, and expenses
 6-63 if the court states the reasons supporting that finding.

6-64 (d) If the court finds that the respondent is in contempt of
 6-65 court for failure or refusal to pay child support and that the
 6-66 respondent owes \$20,000 or more in child support arrearages, the
 6-67 court may not waive the requirement that the respondent pay
 6-68 reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and] costs, and expenses
 6-69 unless the court also finds that the respondent:

7-1 (1) is involuntarily unemployed or is disabled; and
 7-2 (2) lacks the financial resources to pay the
 7-3 attorney's fees, ~~and~~ costs, and expenses.

7-4 SECTION 31. Section 157.211, Family Code, is amended to
 7-5 read as follows:

7-6 Sec. 157.211. CONDITIONS OF COMMUNITY SUPERVISION. (a) If
 7-7 the court places the respondent on community supervision and
 7-8 suspends commitment, the terms and conditions of community
 7-9 supervision may include the requirement that the respondent:

7-10 (1) report to the community supervision officer as
 7-11 directed;

7-12 (2) permit the community supervision officer to visit
 7-13 the respondent at the respondent's home or elsewhere;

7-14 (3) obtain counseling on financial planning, budget
 7-15 management, conflict resolution, parenting skills, alcohol or drug
 7-16 abuse, or other matters causing the respondent to fail to obey the
 7-17 order;

7-18 (4) pay required child support and any child support
 7-19 arrearages;

7-20 (5) pay reasonable and necessary ~~[court costs and]~~
 7-21 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses ordered by the court;

7-22 (6) seek employment assistance services offered by the
 7-23 Texas Workforce Commission under Section 302.0035, Labor Code, if
 7-24 appropriate; and

7-25 (7) participate in mediation or other services to
 7-26 alleviate conditions that prevent the respondent from obeying the
 7-27 court's order.

7-28 (b) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any
 7-29 postjudgment interest under Subsection (a)(5) to be paid directly
 7-30 to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own
 7-31 name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for
 7-32 debt.

7-33 SECTION 32. Section 157.268, Family Code, is amended to
 7-34 read as follows:

7-35 Sec. 157.268. APPLICATION OF CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT. Child
 7-36 support collected shall be applied in the following order of
 7-37 priority:

7-38 (1) current child support;

7-39 (2) non-delinquent child support owed;

7-40 (3) the principal amount of child support that has not
 7-41 been confirmed and reduced to money judgment;

7-42 (4) the principal amount of child support that has
 7-43 been confirmed and reduced to money judgment;

7-44 (5) interest on the principal amounts specified in
 7-45 Subdivisions (3) and (4); and

7-46 (6) the amount of any ordered reasonable and necessary
 7-47 attorney's fees, court ~~[or]~~ costs, expenses, or Title IV-D service
 7-48 fees authorized under Section 231.103 for which the obligor is
 7-49 responsible.

7-50 SECTION 33. Section 157.318(a), Family Code, is amended to
 7-51 read as follows:

7-52 (a) A lien is effective until all current support and child
 7-53 support arrearages, including ~~[interest, any costs and]~~ reasonable
 7-54 and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, postjudgment
 7-55 interest, and any Title IV-D service fees authorized under Section
 7-56 231.103 for which the obligor is responsible, have been paid or the
 7-57 lien is otherwise released as provided by this subchapter.

7-58 SECTION 34. Section 157.322(a), Family Code, is amended to
 7-59 read as follows:

7-60 (a) On payment in full of the amount of child support due,
 7-61 together with any ~~[costs and]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's
 7-62 fees, court costs, and expenses, the child support lien claimant
 7-63 shall execute and deliver to the obligor or the obligor's attorney a
 7-64 release of the child support lien.

7-65 SECTION 35. Section 157.323, Family Code, is amended by
 7-66 amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (e) to read as
 7-67 follows:

7-68 (c) If arrearages are owed by the obligor, the court shall:

7-69 (1) render judgment against the obligor for the amount

8-1 due, plus ~~[costs and]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees,
 8-2 court costs, and expenses;

8-3 (2) order any official authorized to levy execution to
 8-4 satisfy reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs,
 8-5 expenses, and the lien~~[, costs, and attorney's fees]~~ by selling any
 8-6 property on which a lien is established under this subchapter; or

8-7 (3) order an individual or organization in possession
 8-8 of nonexempt personal property or cash owned by the obligor to
 8-9 dispose of the property as the court may direct.

8-10 (e) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any
 8-11 postjudgment interest under Subsection (c)(1) or (2) to be paid
 8-12 directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the
 8-13 attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a
 8-14 judgment for debt.

8-15 SECTION 36. Section 157.330(b), Family Code, is amended to
 8-16 read as follows:

8-17 (b) A claimant may recover ~~[costs and]~~ reasonable and
 8-18 necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred in an
 8-19 action under this section. The court may order the fees, costs,
 8-20 expenses, and any postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the
 8-21 attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own name by
 8-22 any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

8-23 SECTION 37. Section 157.507, Family Code, is amended to
 8-24 read as follows:

8-25 Sec. 157.507. ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT ~~[AND]~~ COSTS, AND
 8-26 EXPENSES. (a) In a proceeding under this subchapter, the court
 8-27 may order the obligor to pay reasonable and necessary attorney's
 8-28 fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by a party to obtain the
 8-29 order~~[, all court costs,]~~ and all fees charged by a plan
 8-30 administrator for the qualified domestic relations order or similar
 8-31 order.

8-32 (b) Fees, ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses ordered under this
 8-33 section may be enforced by any means available for the enforcement
 8-34 of child support, including contempt.

8-35 SECTION 38. The heading to Section 158.0051, Family Code,
 8-36 is amended to read as follows:

8-37 Sec. 158.0051. ORDER FOR WITHHOLDING FOR ATTORNEY'S ~~[COSTS~~
 8-38 ~~AND]~~ FEES, COURT COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

8-39 SECTION 39. Sections 158.0051(a) and (c), Family Code, are
 8-40 amended to read as follows:

8-41 (a) In addition to an order for income to be withheld for
 8-42 child support, including child support and child support
 8-43 arrearages, the court may render an order that income be withheld
 8-44 from the disposable earnings of the obligor to be applied towards
 8-45 the satisfaction of any ordered reasonable and necessary attorney's
 8-46 fees, court ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses resulting from an action to
 8-47 enforce child support under this title.

8-48 (c) The court shall order that amounts withheld for fees,
 8-49 ~~[and]~~ costs, and expenses under this section be remitted directly
 8-50 to the person entitled to the ordered attorney's fees, ~~[or]~~ costs,
 8-51 or expenses or be paid through a local registry for disbursement to
 8-52 that person.

8-53 SECTION 40. Section 158.102, Family Code, is amended to
 8-54 read as follows:

8-55 Sec. 158.102. TIME LIMITATIONS. An order or writ for
 8-56 income withholding under this chapter may be issued until all
 8-57 current support and child support arrearages, interest, and any
 8-58 applicable fees and costs, including ordered reasonable and
 8-59 necessary attorney's fees, ~~[and]~~ court costs, and expenses, have
 8-60 been paid.

8-61 SECTION 41. Section 158.206, Family Code, is amended by
 8-62 amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (d) to read as
 8-63 follows:

8-64 (b) An employer receiving an order or writ of withholding
 8-65 who does not comply with the order or writ is liable:

8-66 (1) to the obligee for the amount not paid in
 8-67 compliance with the order or writ, including the amount the obligor
 8-68 is required to pay for health insurance or dental insurance under
 8-69 Chapter 154;

9-1 (2) to the obligor for:
 9-2 (A) the amount withheld and not paid as required
 9-3 by the order or writ; and

9-4 (B) an amount equal to the interest that accrues
 9-5 under Section 157.265 on the amount withheld and not paid; and

9-6 (3) for reasonable and necessary attorney's fees,
 9-7 ~~[and]~~ court costs, and expenses.

9-8 (d) The court may order the fees, costs, and expenses under
 9-9 Subsection (b)(3) and any postjudgment interest under Subsection
 9-10 (b)(2)(B) to be paid directly to the attorney, who may enforce the
 9-11 order in the attorney's own name by any means available for the
 9-12 enforcement of a judgment for debt.

9-13 SECTION 42. Section 158.209(c), Family Code, is amended to
 9-14 read as follows:

9-15 (c) If an employer intentionally discharges an employee in
 9-16 violation of this section, the employer continues to be liable to
 9-17 the employee for current wages and other benefits and for
 9-18 reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, ~~[and]~~ court costs, and
 9-19 expenses incurred in enforcing the employee's rights as provided in
 9-20 this section. The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any
 9-21 postjudgment interest to be paid directly to the attorney, who may
 9-22 enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available
 9-23 for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

9-24 SECTION 43. Section 159.305, Family Code, is amended by
 9-25 amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (g) to read as
 9-26 follows:

9-27 (b) A responding tribunal of this state, to the extent not
 9-28 prohibited by other law, may do one or more of the following:

9-29 (1) establish or enforce a support order, modify a
 9-30 child support order, determine the controlling child support order,
 9-31 or determine parentage of a child;

9-32 (2) order an obligor to comply with a support order,
 9-33 specifying the amount and the manner of compliance;

9-34 (3) order income withholding;

9-35 (4) determine the amount of any arrearages and specify
 9-36 a method of payment;

9-37 (5) enforce orders by civil or criminal contempt, or
 9-38 both;

9-39 (6) set aside property for satisfaction of the support
 9-40 order;

9-41 (7) place liens and order execution on the obligor's
 9-42 property;

9-43 (8) order an obligor to keep the tribunal informed of
 9-44 the obligor's current residential address, electronic mail
 9-45 address, telephone number, employer, address of employment, and
 9-46 telephone number at the place of employment;

9-47 (9) issue a bench warrant or capias for an obligor who
 9-48 has failed after proper notice to appear at a hearing ordered by the
 9-49 tribunal and enter the bench warrant or capias in any local and
 9-50 state computer systems for criminal warrants;

9-51 (10) order the obligor to seek appropriate employment
 9-52 by specified methods;

9-53 (11) award reasonable and necessary attorney's fees,
 9-54 court costs, expenses, and other fees ~~[and costs]~~; and

9-55 (12) grant any other available remedy.

9-56 (g) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any
 9-57 postjudgment interest under Subsection (b)(11) to be paid directly
 9-58 to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own
 9-59 name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for
 9-60 debt.

9-61 SECTION 44. The heading to Section 159.313, Family Code, is
 9-62 amended to read as follows:

9-63 Sec. 159.313. ~~[COSTS AND]~~ FEEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES.

9-64 SECTION 45. Sections 159.313(b) and (c), Family Code, are
 9-65 amended to read as follows:

9-66 (b) If an obligee prevails, a responding tribunal of this
 9-67 state may assess against an obligor ~~[filing fees,]~~ reasonable and
 9-68 necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, filing fees,
 9-69 other costs, and necessary travel and other reasonable expenses

10-1 incurred by the obligee and the obligee's witnesses. The tribunal
 10-2 may not assess fees, costs, or expenses against the obligee or the
 10-3 support enforcement agency of either the initiating or responding
 10-4 state or foreign country, except as provided by other
 10-5 law. Attorney's fees may be taxed as costs, and may be ordered paid
 10-6 directly to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the
 10-7 attorney's own name. Payment of support owed to the obligee has
 10-8 priority over fees, costs, and expenses.

10-9 (c) The tribunal shall order the payment of ~~[costs and]~~
 10-10 reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses
 10-11 if it determines that a hearing was requested primarily for
 10-12 delay. In a proceeding under Subchapter G, a hearing is presumed
 10-13 to have been requested primarily for delay if a registered support
 10-14 order is confirmed or enforced without change.

10-15 SECTION 46. The heading to Section 160.636, Family Code, is
 10-16 amended to read as follows:

10-17 Sec. 160.636. ORDER ADJUDICATING PARENTAGE; FEES, COSTS,
 10-18 AND EXPENSES.

10-19 SECTION 47. Section 160.636(c), Family Code, is amended to
 10-20 read as follows:

10-21 (c) Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (d), the
 10-22 court may assess ~~[filing fees,]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's
 10-23 fees, court costs, expenses, filing fees, fees for genetic testing,
 10-24 other costs, and necessary travel and other reasonable expenses
 10-25 incurred in a proceeding under this subchapter. Attorney's fees
 10-26 awarded by the court may be paid directly to the attorney. An
 10-27 attorney who is awarded attorney's fees may enforce the order in the
 10-28 attorney's own name by any means available for the enforcement of a
 10-29 judgment for debt.

10-30 SECTION 48. Section 160.762(d), Family Code, is amended to
 10-31 read as follows:

10-32 (d) The court may assess ~~[filing fees,]~~ reasonable and
 10-33 necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, filing fees, fees
 10-34 for genetic testing, other costs, and necessary travel and other
 10-35 reasonable expenses incurred in a proceeding under this
 10-36 section. Attorney's fees awarded by the court may be paid directly
 10-37 to the attorney. An attorney who is awarded attorney's fees may
 10-38 enforce the order in the attorney's own name by any means available
 10-39 for the enforcement of a judgment for debt.

10-40 SECTION 49. Section 231.006(f), Family Code, is amended to
 10-41 read as follows:

10-42 (f) If the certificate required under Subsection (d) is
 10-43 shown to be false, the vendor is liable to the state for reasonable
 10-44 and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, expenses, the costs
 10-45 necessary to complete the contract, including the cost of
 10-46 advertising and awarding a second contract, and any other damages
 10-47 provided by law or contract.

10-48 SECTION 50. Section 231.211, Family Code, is amended to
 10-49 read as follows:

10-50 Sec. 231.211. AWARD OF ATTORNEY'S FEES, COURT COSTS, AND
 10-51 EXPENSES [COST] AGAINST NONPREVAILING PARTY IN TITLE IV-D
 10-52 CASE. (a) At the conclusion of a Title IV-D case, the court may
 10-53 assess reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, [and all] court
 10-54 costs, and expenses as authorized by law against the nonprevailing
 10-55 party, except that the court may not assess those amounts against
 10-56 the Title IV-D agency or a private attorney or political
 10-57 subdivision that has entered into a contract under this chapter or
 10-58 any party to whom the agency has provided services under this
 10-59 chapter. [Such fees and costs may not exceed reasonable and
 10-60 necessary costs as determined by the court.]

10-61 (b) The clerk of the court may take any action necessary to
 10-62 collect any fees, ~~[or]~~ costs, or expenses assessed under this
 10-63 section.

10-64 SECTION 51. Section 231.303(c), Family Code, is amended to
 10-65 read as follows:

10-66 (c) A court may compel compliance with an administrative
 10-67 subpoena and with any administrative fine for failure to comply
 10-68 with the subpoena and may award reasonable and necessary attorney's
 10-69 fees, [and] costs, and expenses to the Title IV-D agency in

11-1 enforcing an administrative subpoena on proof that an individual or
11-2 organization failed without good cause to comply with the subpoena.

11-3 SECTION 52. Section 261.107(d), Family Code, is amended to
11-4 read as follows:

11-5 (d) The court shall order a person who is convicted of an
11-6 offense under Subsection (a) to pay any reasonable and necessary
11-7 attorney's fees, court costs, and expenses incurred by the person
11-8 who was falsely accused of abuse or neglect in any proceeding
11-9 relating to the false report.

11-10 SECTION 53. Sections 261.108(b) and (c), Family Code, are
11-11 amended to read as follows:

11-12 (b) A court shall award a defendant reasonable and necessary
11-13 attorney's fees, court costs, and other expenses related to the
11-14 defense of a claim filed against the defendant for damages or other
11-15 relief arising from reporting or assisting in the investigation of
11-16 a report under this chapter or participating in a judicial
11-17 proceeding resulting from the report if:

11-18 (1) the court finds that the claim is frivolous,
11-19 unreasonable, or without foundation because the defendant is immune
11-20 from liability under Section 261.106; and

11-21 (2) the claim is dismissed or judgment is rendered for
11-22 the defendant.

11-23 (c) To recover under this section, the defendant must, at
11-24 any time after the filing of a claim, file a written motion stating
11-25 that:

11-26 (1) the claim is frivolous, unreasonable, or without
11-27 foundation because the defendant is immune from liability under
11-28 Section 261.106; and

11-29 (2) the defendant requests the court to award
11-30 reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court costs, and other
11-31 expenses related to the defense of the claim.

11-32 SECTION 54. Section 261.110, Family Code, is amended by
11-33 amending Subsection (d) and adding Subsection (n) to read as
11-34 follows:

11-35 (d) A plaintiff who prevails in a suit under this section
11-36 may recover:

11-37 (1) actual damages, including damages for mental
11-38 anguish even if an injury other than mental anguish is not shown;

11-39 (2) exemplary damages under Chapter 41, Civil Practice
11-40 and Remedies Code, if the employer is a private employer; and

11-41 (3) ~~[court costs, and~~
11-42 ~~[4)]~~ reasonable and necessary attorney's fees, court
11-43 costs, and expenses.

11-44 (n) The court may order the fees, costs, expenses, and any
11-45 postjudgment interest under Subsection (d)(3) to be paid directly
11-46 to the attorney, who may enforce the order in the attorney's own
11-47 name by any means available for the enforcement of a judgment for
11-48 debt.

11-49 SECTION 55. Section 264.852(d), Family Code, is amended to
11-50 read as follows:

11-51 (d) A permanency care assistance agreement may provide for
11-52 reimbursement of the nonrecurring expenses a kinship provider
11-53 incurs in obtaining permanent managing conservatorship of a foster
11-54 child, including attorney's fees, ~~[and]~~ court costs, and
11-55 expenses. The reimbursement of the nonrecurring expenses under
11-56 this subsection may not exceed \$2,000.

11-57 SECTION 56. The change in law made by this Act applies to a
11-58 suit that is filed on or after the effective date of this Act. A suit
11-59 filed before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law
11-60 in effect on the date the suit was filed, and the former law is
11-61 continued in effect for that purpose.

11-62 SECTION 57. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

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