



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR OTTER CALLS SPECIAL SESSION OF IDAHO LEGISLATURE ON CHILD SUPPORT

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter announced today that he is calling a rare special session of the Idaho Legislature starting at 8 a.m. on May 18 to consider maintaining Idaho's child support system.

"I don't take either this decision or the legislative action that precipitated it lightly. With our partners in the Legislature and the experts at the Department of Health and Welfare, we have explored all our options and come to the conclusion that only a special session will accomplish our goal – protecting the children and families of Idaho who rely on court-ordered child support payments," Governor Otter said.

The Governor issued a [Proclamation](#) calling the special session, which is limited to considering the issue of Idaho's child support system.

A House committee tabled Senate-passed legislation, which would have kept Idaho in compliance with the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act, shortly before the Legislature adjourned for the year in the early morning hours of April 11.

The Department of Health and Welfare had cautioned legislators that failing to enact the bill would cut off much of the funding for the State's child support system, including enforcement of child support orders. More than 400,000 children and parents – or one in four Idaho citizens – would be impacted by that loss, representing 155,000 child support cases. Health and Welfare no longer would be able to collect funds through wage withholding, locate parents when they change jobs, or work with other states on child support cases.

Specifically, Idaho stands to lose \$16 million from the U.S. Office of Child Support Enforcement, or about two-thirds of the State's child support enforcement budget. In addition, the State would lose access to the federal database system and tools for enforcing \$205 million a year in child support payments to Idaho children. Another \$30 million could be lost in federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which funds such services as child care for low-income working families, children's mental health and the Head Start program. The federal Administration for Children and Families informed the State on April 14 that it had 60 days – until June 12 – to restore its compliance.

“It’s important for all of us to get a better understanding of the issue and what’s at stake. A special session will accomplish that,” House Speaker Scott Bedke said. “The Legislature as a body and legislators as individuals want to do right by the people of Idaho, and we will.”

“This program affects thousands of children in Idaho who would become helpless victims without this action,” Senate President Pro Tem Brent Hill said. “I express my appreciation to Governor Otter, Speaker Bedke and many others who have worked to resolve this important issue and look forward to a productive special session.”

Health and Welfare’s Q&A on what’s at stake can be found [here](#), and a detailed analysis of the issue prompting the special session can be found [here](#).

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