

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2024 SESSION

CHAPTER 51

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 20-60.3 and 20-107.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to entry or modification of support orders; determination of support overages.

[H 784]

Approved March 8, 2024

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 20-60.3 and 20-107.1 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 20-60.3. Contents of support orders.

All orders directing the payment of spousal support where there are minor children whom the parties have a mutual duty to support and all orders directing the payment of child support, including those orders confirming separation agreements, entered on or after October 1, 1985, whether they are original orders or modifications of existing orders, shall contain the following:

1. Notice that support payments may be withheld as they become due pursuant to § 20-79.1 or § 20-79.2, from income as defined in § 63.2-1900, without further amendments of this order or having to file an application for services with the Department of Social Services; however, absence of such notice in an order entered prior to July 1, 1988, shall not bar withholding of support payments pursuant to § 20-79.1;

2. Notice that support payments may be withheld pursuant to Chapter 19 (§ 63.2-1900 et seq.) of Title 63.2 without further amendments to the order upon application for services with the Department of Social Services; however, absence of such notice in an order entered prior to July 1, 1988, shall not bar withholding of support payments pursuant to Chapter 19 (§ 63.2-1900 et seq.) of Title 63.2;

3. The name, date of birth, and last four digits of the social security number of each child to whom a duty of support is then owed by the parent;

4. If known, the name, date of birth, and last four digits of the social security number of each parent of the child and, unless otherwise ordered, each parent's residential and, if different, mailing address, residential and employer telephone number, and number appearing on a driver's license or other document issued under Chapter 3 (§ 46.2-300 et seq.) of Title 46.2 or the comparable law of another jurisdiction, and the name and address of each parent's employer; however, when a protective order has been issued or the court otherwise finds reason to believe that a party is at risk of physical or emotional harm from the other party, information other than the name of the party at risk shall not be included in the order;

5. Notice that, pursuant to § 20-124.2, support will continue to be paid for any child over the age of 18 who is (i) a full-time high school student, (ii) not self-supporting, and (iii) living in the home of the party seeking or receiving child support until such child reaches the age of 19 or graduates from high school, whichever occurs first, and that the court may also order that support be paid or continue to be paid for any child over the age of 18 who is (a) severely and permanently mentally or physically disabled, and such disability existed prior to the child reaching the age of 18 or the age of 19 if the child met the requirements of clauses (i), (ii), and (iii); (b) unable to live independently and support himself; and (c) residing in the home of the parent seeking or receiving child support;

6. On and after July 1, 1994, notice that a petition may be filed for suspension of any license, certificate, registration or other authorization to engage in a profession, trade, business, occupation, or recreational activity issued by the Commonwealth to a parent as provided in § 63.2-1937 upon a delinquency for a period of 90 days or more or in an amount of \$5,000 or more. The order shall indicate whether either or both parents currently hold such an authorization and, if so, the type of authorization held;

7. The monthly amount of support and the effective date of the order. In proceedings on initial petitions, the effective date shall be the date of filing of the petition; in modification proceedings, the effective date may be the date of notice to the responding party. The first monthly payment shall be due on the first day of the month following the hearing date and on the first day of each month thereafter. In addition, an amount shall be assessed for any full and partial months between the effective date of the order and the date that the first monthly payment is due. The assessment for the initial partial month shall be prorated from the effective date through the end of that month, based on the current monthly obligation;

8. a. An order for health care coverage, including the health insurance policy information, for dependent children pursuant to §§ 20-108.1 and 20-108.2 if available at reasonable cost as defined in § 63.2-1900, or a written statement that health care coverage is not available at a reasonable cost as defined in such section, and a statement as to whether there is an order for health care coverage for a spouse or former spouse; and

b. A statement as to whether cash medical support, as defined in § 63.2-1900, is to be paid by or reimbursed to a party pursuant to subsections D and G of § 20-108.2, and if such expenses are ordered, then the provisions governing how such payment is to be made;

9. *a.* If support arrearages exist, (i) to whom an arrearage is owed and the amount of the arrearage, (ii) the period of time for which such arrearage is calculated, and (iii) a direction that all payments are to be credited to current support obligations first, with any payment in excess of the current obligation applied to arrearages; *and*

b. If support overages exist, (i) to whom an overage is owed and the amount of the overage, (ii) the period of time for which such overage is calculated, and (iii) how such overage is to be paid;

10. If child support payments are ordered to be paid through the Department of Social Services or directly to the obligee, and unless the court for good cause shown orders otherwise, the parties shall give each other and the court and, when payments are to be made through the Department, the Department of Social Services at least 30 days' written notice, in advance, of any change of address and any change of telephone number within 30 days after the change;

11. If child support payments are ordered to be paid through the Department of Social Services, a provision requiring an obligor to keep the Department of Social Services informed, or if payments are ordered to be paid directly to the obligee, a provision requiring an obligor to keep the court informed, of (i) the name, address, and telephone number of his current employer; (ii) any change to his employment status; and (iii) if he has filed a claim for or is receiving benefits under the provisions of Title 60.2. The provision shall further specify that any such change in employment status or filing of a claim shall be communicated to the Department of Social Services or the court in writing within 30 days of such change or filing;

12. If child support payments are ordered to be paid through the Department of Social Services, a provision requiring the party obligated to provide health care coverage to keep the Department of Social Services informed of any changes in the availability of the health care coverage for the minor child or children, or if payments are ordered to be paid directly to the obligee, a provision requiring the party obligated to provide health care coverage to keep the other party informed of any changes in the availability of the health care coverage for the minor child or children;

13. The separate amounts due to each person under the order, unless the court specifically orders a unitary award of child and spousal support due or the order affirms a separation agreement containing provision for such unitary award;

14. Notice that in determination of a support obligation, the support obligation as it becomes due and unpaid creates a judgment by operation of law. The order shall also provide, pursuant to § 20-78.2, for interest on the arrearage at the judgment rate as established by § 6.2-302 unless the obligee, in a writing submitted to the court, waives the collection of interest;

15. Notice that on and after July 1, 1994, the Department of Social Services may, pursuant to Chapter 19 (§ 63.2-1900 et seq.) of Title 63.2 and in accordance with §§ 20-108.2 and 63.2-1921, initiate a review of the amount of support ordered by any court;

16. A statement that if any arrearages for child support, including interest or fees, exist at the time the youngest child included in the order emancipates, payments shall continue in the total amount due (current support plus amount applied toward arrearages) at the time of emancipation until all arrearages are paid; and

17. Notice that, in cases enforced by the Department of Social Services, the Department of Motor Vehicles may suspend or refuse to renew the driver's license, or other document issued under Chapter 3 (§ 46.2-300 et seq.) of Title 46.2 authorizing the operation of a motor vehicle upon the highways, of any person upon receipt of notice from the Department of Social Services that the person (i) is delinquent in the payment of child support by 90 days or in an amount of \$5,000 or more or (ii) has failed to comply with a subpoena, summons, or warrant relating to paternity or child support proceedings.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to divorce decrees where there are no minor children whom the parties have a mutual duty to support.

§ 20-107.1. Court may decree as to maintenance and support of spouses.

A. Pursuant to any proceeding arising under subsection L of § 16.1-241 or upon the entry of a decree providing (i) for the dissolution of a marriage, (ii) for a divorce, whether from the bond of matrimony or from bed and board, (iii) that neither party is entitled to a divorce, or (iv) for separate maintenance, the court may make such further decree as it shall deem expedient concerning the maintenance and support of the spouses, notwithstanding a party's failure to prove his grounds for divorce, provided that a claim for support has been properly pled by the party seeking support. However, the court shall have no authority to decree maintenance and support payable by the estate of a deceased spouse.

B. Any maintenance and support shall be subject to the provisions of § 20-109, and no permanent maintenance and support shall be awarded from a spouse if there exists in such spouse's favor a ground of divorce under the provisions of subdivision A (1) of § 20-91. However, the court may make such an award notwithstanding the existence of such ground if the court determines from clear and convincing evidence, that a denial of support and maintenance would constitute a manifest injustice, based upon the respective degrees of fault during the marriage and the relative economic circumstances of the parties.

C. The court, in its discretion, may decree that maintenance and support of a spouse be made in periodic payments for a defined duration, or in periodic payments for an undefined duration, or in a lump sum award, or in any combination thereof.

D. In addition to or in lieu of an award pursuant to subsection C, the court may reserve the right of a party to receive support in the future. In any case in which the right to support is so reserved, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the reservation will continue for a period equal to 50 percent of the length of time between the date of the marriage and the date of separation. Once granted, the duration of such a reservation shall not be subject to modification. Unless otherwise provided by stipulation or contract executed on or after July 1, 2020, or unless otherwise ordered by the court on or after July 1, 2020, a party seeking to exercise his right to support so reserved shall be required to prove a material change of circumstances as a prerequisite for the court to consider exercise of such reservation.

E. The court, in determining whether to award support and maintenance for a spouse, shall consider the circumstances and factors which contributed to the dissolution of the marriage, specifically including adultery and any other ground for divorce under the provisions of subdivision A (3) or (6) of § 20-91 or § 20-95. In determining the nature, amount and duration of an award pursuant to this section, the court shall consider the following:

1. The obligations, needs and financial resources of the parties, including but not limited to income from all pension, profit sharing or retirement plans, of whatever nature;
2. The standard of living established during the marriage;
3. The duration of the marriage;
4. The age and physical and mental condition of the parties and any special circumstances of the family;
5. The extent to which the age, physical or mental condition or special circumstances of any child of the parties would make it appropriate that a party not seek employment outside of the home;
6. The contributions, monetary and nonmonetary, of each party to the well-being of the family;
7. The property interests of the parties, both real and personal, tangible and intangible;
8. The provisions made with regard to the marital property under § 20-107.3;
9. The earning capacity, including the skills, education and training of the parties and the present employment opportunities for persons possessing such earning capacity;
10. The opportunity for, ability of, and the time and costs involved for a party to acquire the appropriate education, training and employment to obtain the skills needed to enhance his earning ability;
11. The decisions regarding employment, career, economics, education and parenting arrangements made by the parties during the marriage and their effect on present and future earning potential, including the length of time one or both of the parties have been absent from the job market;
12. The extent to which either party has contributed to the attainment of education, training, career position or profession of the other party; and
13. Such other factors, including the tax consequences to each party and the circumstances and factors that contributed to the dissolution, specifically including any ground for divorce, as are necessary to consider the equities between the parties.

F. In contested cases in the circuit courts, any order granting, reserving or denying a request for spousal support shall be accompanied by written findings and conclusions of the court identifying the factors in subsection E which support the court's order. Any order granting or reserving any request for spousal support shall state whether the retirement of either party was contemplated by the court and specifically considered by the court in making its award, and, if so, the order shall state the facts the court contemplated and specifically considered as to the retirement of the party. If the court awards periodic support for a defined duration, such findings shall identify the basis for the nature, amount and duration of the award and, if appropriate, a specification of the events and circumstances reasonably contemplated by the court which support the award.

G. For purposes of this section and § 20-109, "date of separation" means the earliest date at which the parties are physically separated and at least one party intends such separation to be permanent provided the separation is continuous thereafter and "defined duration" means a period of time (i) with a specific beginning and ending date or (ii) specified in relation to the occurrence or cessation of an event or condition other than death or termination pursuant to § 20-110.

H. Where there are no minor children whom the parties have a mutual duty to support, an order directing the payment of spousal support, including those orders confirming separation agreements, entered on or after October 1, 1985, whether they are original orders or modifications of existing orders, shall contain the following:

1. If known, the name, date of birth, and social security number of each party and, unless otherwise ordered, each party's residential and, if different, mailing address, residential and employer telephone number, and number appearing on a driver's license or other document issued under Chapter 3 (§ 46.2-300 et seq.) of Title 46.2 or the comparable law of another jurisdiction, and the name and address of each party's employer; however, when a protective order has been issued or the court

otherwise finds reason to believe that a party is at risk of physical or emotional harm from the other party, information other than the name of the party at risk shall not be included in the order;

2. The amount of periodic spousal support expressed in fixed sums, together with the payment interval, the date payments are due, and the date the first payment is due;

3. A statement as to whether there is an order for health care coverage for a party;

4. If support arrearages exist, (i) to whom an arrearage is owed and the amount of the arrearage, (ii) the period of time for which such arrearage is calculated, and (iii) a direction that all payments are to be credited to current spousal support obligations first, with any payment in excess of the current obligation applied to arrearages;

5. *If support overages exist, (i) to whom an overage is owed and the amount of the overage, (ii) the period of time for which such overage is calculated, and (iii) how such overage is to be paid;*

6. If spousal support payments are ordered to be paid directly to the obligee, and unless the court for good cause shown orders otherwise, the parties shall give each other and the court at least 30 days' written notice, in advance, of any change of address and any change of telephone number within 30 days after the change; and

~~6.~~ 7. Notice that in determination of a spousal support obligation, the support obligation as it becomes due and unpaid creates a judgment by operation of law.