

legal process to be served, or the party's representative, that the legal process will not be honored. Thereafter, if litigation is initiated or threatened, the entity shall immediately refer the matter to the United States Attorney for the district from which the legal process issued. To ensure uniformity in the executive branch, governmental entities which have statutory authority to represent themselves in court shall coordinate their representation with the United States Attorney.

(d) If a governmental entity is served with more than one legal process for the same moneys due or payable to an individual, the entity shall comply with § 581.303(a). *Provided*, That in no event will the total amount garnished for any pay or disbursement cycle exceed the applicable limitation set forth in § 581.402.

(e)(1) Neither the United States, any disbursing officer, nor any governmental entity shall be liable for any payment made from moneys due from, or payable by, the United States to any individual pursuant to legal process regular on its face, if such payment is made in accordance with this part.

(2) Neither the United States, any disbursing officer, nor any governmental entity shall be liable under this part to pay money damages for failure to comply with legal process.

(f) Governmental entities affected by legal process served under this part shall not be required to vary their normal pay or disbursement cycles to comply with the legal process. However, legal process, valid at the time of service, which is received too late to be honored during the disbursement cycle in which it is received, shall be honored to the extent that the legal process may be satisfied during the next disbursement cycle within the limits set forth in § 581.402. The fact that the legal process may have expired during this period would not relieve the governmental entity of its obligation to honor legal process which was valid at the time of service. If, in the next disbursement cycle, no further payment will be due from the entity to the obligor, the entity shall follow the procedures set forth in § 581.306.

(g) If a governmental entity receives legal process which, on its face, ap-

pears to conform to the laws of the jurisdiction from which it was issued, the entity shall not be required to ascertain whether the authority which issued the legal process had obtained personal jurisdiction over the obligor.

(h) A failure by the party bringing the garnishment action to comply with the provisions of the Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act (URESA) or the Revised Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act by itself shall not be a valid basis for a governmental entity to refuse to comply with legal process.

[45 FR 85667, Dec. 30, 1980, as amended at 48 FR 26280, June 7, 1983; 55 FR 1357, Jan. 16, 1990; 63 FR 14759, Mar. 26, 1998]

**§ 581.306 Lack of moneys due from, or payable by, a governmental entity served with legal process.**

(a) When legal process is served on a governmental entity, and the individual identified in the legal process as the obligor is found not to be entitled to moneys (the entitlement to which is based upon remuneration for employment) due from, or payable by, the governmental entity, the entity shall follow the procedures set forth in the legal process for that contingency or, if no procedures are set forth therein, shall return the legal process to the court, or other authority from which it was issued, and advise the court, or other authority, that no moneys, the entitlement to which is based upon remuneration for employment, are due from, or payable by, the governmental entity to the named individual.

(b) Where it appears that remuneration for employment is only temporarily exhausted or otherwise unavailable, the court, or other authority, shall be fully advised as to why, and for how long, the remuneration will be unavailable, if that information is known by the governmental entity.

(c) In instances where an employee obligor separates from his/her employment with a governmental entity which is presently honoring a continuing legal process, the entity shall inform the party who caused the legal process to be served, or the party's representative, and the court, or other authority, that the payments are being

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discontinued. In cases where the obligor has a Thrift Savings Fund account, or has retired, or has separated and requested a refund of retirement contributions, or transferred, or is receiving benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, or where the employee obligor has been employed by either another governmental entity or by a private employer, and where this information is known by the governmental entity, the governmental entity shall provide the party with the designated agent for the new disbursing governmental entity or with the name and address of the private employer.

[45 FR 85667, Dec. 30, 1980, as amended at 48 FR 26281, June 7, 1983; 55 FR 1357, Jan. 16, 1990; 58 FR 35846, July 2, 1993]

**§ 581.307 Compliance with legal process requiring the payment of attorney fees, interest, and/or court costs.**

Before complying with legal process that requires withholding for the payment of attorney fees, interest, and/or court costs, the governmental entity must determine that the legal process meets both of the following requirements:

(a) The legal process must expressly provide for inclusion of attorney fees, interest, and/or court costs as (rather than in addition to) child support and/or alimony payments;

(b) The awarding of attorney fees, interest, and/or court costs as child support and/or alimony must be within the authority of the court, authorized official, or authorized State agency that issued the legal process. It will be deemed to be within the authority of the court, authorized official, or authorized State agency to award attorney fees as child support and/or alimony if such order is not in violation of or inconsistent with State or local law, even if State or local law does not expressly provide for such an award.

[55 FR 1357, Jan. 16, 1990]

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**Subpart D—Consumer Credit Protection Act Restrictions**

**§ 581.401 Aggregate disposable earnings.**

The “aggregate disposable earnings”, when used in reference to the amounts due from, or payable by, the United States or the District of Columbia which are garnishable under the Consumer Credit Protection Act for child support and/or alimony, are the obligor’s remuneration for employment less those amounts deducted in accordance with § 581.105.

**§ 581.402 Maximum garnishment limitations.**

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, pursuant to section 1673(b)(2) (A) and (B) of title 15 of the United States Code (the Consumer Credit Protection Act, as amended), unless a lower maximum garnishment limitation is provided by applicable State or local law, the maximum part of the aggregate disposable earnings subject to garnishment to enforce any support order(s) shall not exceed:

(1) Fifty percent of the obligor’s aggregate disposable earnings for any workweek, where the obligor asserts by affidavit, or by other acceptable evidence, that he or she is supporting a spouse, a dependent child, or both, other than the former spouse, child, or both, for whose support such order is issued, except that an additional five percent will apply if it appears on the face of the legal process, or from other evidence submitted in accordance with § 581.202(d), that such earnings are to enforce a support order for a period which is 12 weeks prior to that workweek. An obligor shall be considered to be supporting a spouse, dependent child, or both, only if the obligor provides over half of the support for a spouse, dependent child or both.

(2) Sixty percent of the obligor’s aggregate disposable earnings for any workweek, where the obligor fails to assert by affidavit or establishes by other acceptable evidence, that he or