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United States Department of State

Department Notice

All Employees: State AID ACDA

Denial of Diplomatic and Official Passports to Individuals Owing Over \$5,000 Child Support

The Director General would like to bring the following information to the attention of all employees. On October 1, 1997, the Personal Responsibility and Work opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193) went into effect. The statute prohibits any individual from receiving a United States passport who has been certified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to the Secretary of State as being in arrears on child support payments by an amount exceeding \$5,000. This prohibition extends to the issuance of diplomatic and official passports. It includes both new issuances and renewals. Individuals certified by HHS will have been notified directly by a state child support enforcement agency before being placed on the HHS certified list.

Any individual who is denied a passport under this law, including a diplomatic or official passport, will receive a denial letter stating that he or she has been certified to the Department as being in arrears of child support in an amount of \$5,000 or more. A list of the state child support enforcement offices in the United States with their telephone numbers and addresses will be provided so that the individual may contact the appropriate office involved in his or her case to resolve the matter. The Department has no authority to waive this statutory requirement. Nor will the Department have any additional information concerning the individual's situation, such as which state the individual needs to contact or the exact amount owed. Therefore, the denial decision is not appealable within the Department.

The Department does not have the authority or latitude to issue a passport once an HHS certified individual has been identified. However, once the applicant's name has been removed from the database, the applicant will then be eligible to reapply for the diplomatic passport.

Questions regarding this Departmental Notice may be addressed to:

Office of Passport Policy, Planning and Advisory Services
Suite 260, SA-17
(262) 955-0231

Office of Origin: PER/EX