



Kansas is looking to prod parents to catch up on their child support, arguing that doing so could chip away at the the cost of welfare.

The Department for Children and Families website launched a child support evaders Web page (<https://dcfforms.dcf.ks.gov/childsupportevaders/Pages/default.aspx>) Wednesday that features pictures of 10 delinquent parents. It includes notes on what they owe, where they were last seen, and a link to report their whereabouts.

Gov. Jeff Colyer said delinquent parents shift child support costs on to taxpayers.

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**"When a mom or dad who has kids can't afford the expenses to maintain the household, they may be forced to turn to welfare benefits." -- Gov. Jeff Colyer**

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"When both parents are financially supporting their children, it means the difference between being in poverty and being independent from government assistance," Colyer said. "When a mom or dad who has kids can't afford the expenses to maintain the household, they may be forced to turn to welfare benefits."

Colyer's predecessor, Gov. Sam Brownback, enacted "self-reliance" policies (<http://kcur.org/post/welfare-remade-under-brownback-still-debated>) aimed at getting

families off state assistance.

Despite criticism (<http://kcur.org/post/report-poor-families-struggling-kansas-welfare-rules#stream/0>) that Brownback's welfare changes have left poor families out in the cold, Colyer

has said he doesn't have any plans to roll back his predecessor's policies.

People receiving state assistance will not be listed on DCF's child support evaders page, said Trisha Thomas, DCF's director of child support services. Parents listed on the site owe more than \$5,000 and are not facing bankruptcy.

Thomas said DCF is currently only able to collect about 56 percent of child support payments owed, which was about \$200 million last year.

The 10 offenders listed currently owe between \$36,000 and \$95,000. DCF didn't make any projections about how much more money the website might bring in.

Divorce attorney Ronald Nelson said he's usually skeptical of public shaming efforts, which he said often fall disproportionately on the poor. But he supports the effort, which he said seems narrowly focused on those "who have for long periods of time refused to pay their lawfully entered and reasonably determined child support payments."

Thomas said the site is intended both as a deterrent and a way to locate parents. Once delinquent payers are found, DCF has more options to make sure they make payments. They can be charged with criminal non-support or contempt, for example. The agency can also set up income-withholding orders, which it uses to take payments directly out of the non-custodial parent's paychecks.

"Our goal," she said, "is to encourage non-custodial parents to act responsibly."

*Madeline Fox is a reporter for the Kansas News Service, a collaboration of KCUR, Kansas Public Radio, KMUW and High Plains Public Radio covering health, education and politics. You can reach her on Twitter @maddycfox (<https://twitter.com/maddycfox>). Kansas News Service stories and photos may be republished at no cost with proper attribution and a link back to the original post.*

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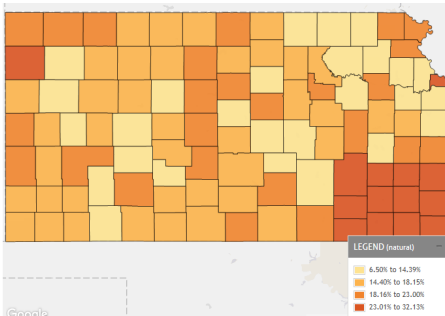
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