WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION, 1972

ENROLLED

SENATE BILL NO. 123

(By Mr. Moveland And Mr. Deem.)

PASSED MARCH 11, 1972

In Effect 90 DAYS FROM Passage

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STATE OF WEST VIRGINE FILED IN THE OFFICE, IV SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, IV SECRETARY OF STATE THIS DATE <u>3-29-72</u>

ENROLLED Senate Bill No. 123

(By Mr. MORELAND and Mr. DEEM)

[Passed March 11, 1972; in effect ninety days from passage.]

AN ACT to amend and reenact article nine, chapter forty-eight of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, relating to the revised uniform reciprocal enforcement of support act.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That article nine, chapter forty-eight of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, be amended and reenacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE 9. REVISED UNIFORM RECIPROCAL ENFORCEMENT OF SUPPORT ACT.

§48-9-1. Purposes.

1 The purposes of this article are to improve and extend 2 by reciprocal legislation the enforcement of duties of 3 support.

§48-9-2. Definitions.

1 As used in this article unless the context requires other-2 wise:

3 (1) "Court" means the criminal, intermediate or circuit 4 court, or any other court of record having jurisdiction in 5 this state and, when the context requires, means the 6 court of any other state as defined in a substantially 7 similar reciprocal law.

8 (2) "Duty of support" means a duty of support whether
9 imposed or imposable by law or by order, decree or
10 judgment of any court, whether interlocutory or final,
11 or whether incidental to an action for divorce, separation,
12 separate maintenance or otherwise and includes the duty
13 to pay arrearages of support past due and unpaid.

14 (3) "Governor" includes any person performing the
15 functions of governor or the executive authority of any
16 state covered by this article.

17 (4) "Initiating state" means a state in which a pro18 ceeding pursuant to this or a substantially similar re19 ciprocal law is commenced. "Initiating court" means the
20 court in which a proceeding is commenced.

21 (5) "Law" includes both common and statutory law.

(6) "Obligee" means a person including a state or political subdivision to whom a duty of support is owed or a
person including a state or political subdivision that has
commenced a proceeding for enforcement of an alleged
duty of support or for registration of a support order.
It is immaterial if the person to whom a duty of support
is owed is a recipient of public assistance.

(7) "Obligor" means any person owing a duty of support or against whom a proceeding for the enforcement
of a duty of support or registration of a support order is
commenced.

(8) "Prosecuting attorney" means the public official in
the appropriate place who has the duty to enforce criminal laws relating to the failure to provide for the support of any person.

37 (9) "Register" means to record in the registry of38 foreign support orders.

39 (10) "Registering court" means any court of this state40 in which a support order of a rendering state is registered.

41 (11) "Rendering state" means a state in which the
42 court has issued a support order for which registration is
43 sought or granted in the court of another state.

(12) "Responding state" means a state in which any
responsive proceeding pursuant to the proceeding in the
initiating state is commenced. "Responding court" means
the court in which the responsive proceeding is commenced.

49 (13) "State" includes a state, territory or possession of
50 the United States, the District of Columbia, the Common51 wealth of Puerto Rico and any foreign jurisdiction in
52 which this or a substantially similar reciprocal law is in
53 effect.

54 (14) "Support order" means any judgment, decree or 55 order of support in favor of an obligee whether temporary or final, or subject to modification, revocation or
remission, regardless of the kind of action or proceeding
in which it is entered.

§48-9-3. Remedies cumulative.

1 The remedies herein provided are in addition to and 2 not in substitution for any other remedies.

§48-9-4. Extent of duties of support.

- 1 Duties of support arising under the law of this state,
- $2\,$ when applicable under section seven, bind the obligor
- 3 present in this state regardless of the presence or resi-4 dence of the obligee.

§48-9-5. Interstate rendition.

1 The governor of this state may:

2 (1) Demand of the governor of another state the sur-3 render of a person found in that state who is charged 4 criminally in this state with failing to provide for the 5 support of any person; or

6 (2) Surrender on demand by the governor of another 7 state a person found in this state who is charged crimi-8 nally in that state with failing to provide for the support 9 of any person. Provisions for extradition of criminals not 10 inconsistent with this article apply to the demand even 11 if the person whose surrender is demanded was not in 12 the demanding state at the time of the commission of 13 the crime and has not fied therefrom. The demand, the 14 oath, and any proceedings for extradition pursuant to 15 this section need not state or show that the person whose 16 surrender is demanded has fied from justice or at the 17 time of the commission of the crime was in the demand-18 ing state.

§48-9-6. Conditions of interstate rendition.

1 (a) Before making the demand upon the governor of 2 another state for the surrender of a person charged 3 criminally in this state with failing to provide for the 4 support of a person, the governor of this state may re-5 quire any prosecuting attorney of this state to satisfy him 6 that at least sixty days prior thereto the obligee initiated 7 proceedings for support under this article or that any 8 proceeding would be of no avail. 4

9 (b) If, under a substantially similar reciprocal law, 10 the governor of another state makes a demand upon the 11 governor of this state for the surrender of a person 12 charged criminally in that state with failure to provide 13 for the support of a person, the governor may require 14 any prosecuting attorney to investigate the demand and 15 to report to him whether proceedings for support have 16 been initiated or would be effective. If it appears to the 17 governor that a proceeding would be effective but has not 18 been initiated he may delay honoring the demand for a 19 reasonable time to permit the initiation of a proceeding.

(c) If proceedings have been initiated and the person
demanded has prevailed therein the governor may decline
to honor the demand. If the obligee prevailed and the
person demanded is subject to a support order, the governor may decline to honor the demand if the person
demanded is complying with the support order.

§48-9-7. Choice of law.

1 Duties of support applicable under this article are those 2 imposed under the laws of any state where the obligor 3 was present for the period during which support is 4 sought. The obligor is presumed to have been present in 5 the responding state during the period for which support 6 is sought until otherwise shown.

§48-9-8. Remedies of state or political subdivision furnishing support.

- 1 If a state or a political subdivision furnishes support 2 to an individual obligee it has the same right to initiate 3 a proceeding under this article as the individual obligee
- 4 for the purpose of securing reimbursement for support
- 5 furnished and of obtaining continuing support
- $5\,$ furnished and of obtaining continuing support.

§48-9-9. How duties of support enforced.

1 All duties of support, including the duty to pay arrear-2 ages, are enforceable by a proceeding under this article 3 including a proceeding for civil contempt. The defense 4 that the parties are immune to suit because of their re-5 lationship as husband and wife or parent and child is not 6 available to the obligor.

§48-9-10. Jurisdiction.

1 Jurisdiction of any proceeding under this article is 2 vested in courts of record.

§48-9-11. Contents and filing of petition for support; venue.

1 (a) The petition or complaint shall be verified and 2 shall state the name and, so far as known to the obligee, 3 the address and circumstances of the obligor and the per-4 sons for whom support is sought, and all other pertinent 5 information. The obligee may include in or attach to the 6 petition or complaint any information which may help in 7 locating or identifying the obligor including a photograph 8 of the obligor, a description of any distinguishing marks 9 on his person, other names and aliases by which he has 10 been or is known, the name of his employer, his finger-11 prints and his social security number.

12 (b) The petition or complaint may be filed in the 13 appropriate court of any state in which the obligee resides. 14 The court shall not decline or refuse to accept and for-15 ward the petition or complaint on the ground that it 16 should be filed with some other court of this or any 17 other state where there is pending another action for 18 divorce, separation, annulment, dissolution, habeas 19 corpus, adoption or custody between the same parties 20 or where another court has already issued a support 21 order in some other proceeding and has retained jurisdic-22 tion for its enforcement.

§48-9-12. Officials to represent obligee.

1 If this state is acting as an initiating state the prose-2 cuting attorney, upon the request of the court or the 3 state department of welfare, shall represent the obligee 4 in any proceeding under this article.

§48-9-13. Petition for a minor.

1 A petition or complaint on behalf of a minor obligee 2 may be executed and filed by a person having legal 3 custody of the minor without appointment as guardian ad 4 litem.

§48-9-14. Duty of initiating court.

1 If the initiating court finds that the petition or com-

2 plaint sets forth facts from which it may be determined 3 that the obligor owes a duty of support and that a court 4 of the responding state may obtain jurisdiction of the 5 obligor or his property, it shall so certify and cause three 6 copies of the petition or complaint and its certificate and 7 one copy of this article to be sent to the responding court. 8 Certification shall be in accordance with the requirements 9 of the initiating state. If the name and address of the re-10 sponding court is unknown and the responding state has 11 an information agency comparable to that established 12 in the initiating state it shall cause the copies to be sent 13 to the state information agency or other proper official 14 of the responding state, with a request that the agency 15 or official forward them to the proper court and that the 16 court of the responding state acknowledge their receipt 17 to the initiating court.

§48-9-15. Costs and fees.

1 An initiating court shall not require payment of either 2 a filing fee or other costs from the obligee, but may re-3 quest the responding court to collect fees and costs from the obligor. A responding court shall not require pay-4 5 ment of a filing fee or other costs from the obligee, but it 6 may direct that all fees and costs requested by the 7 initiating court and incurred in this state when acting as a responding state, including fees for filing of pleadings, 8 9 service of process, seizure of property, stenographic or 10 duplication service or other service supplied to the obligor, 11 be paid in whole or in part by the obligor. These costs 12 or fees do not have priority over amounts due to the obligee. 13

§48-9-16. Jurisdiction by arrest.

1 If the court of this state believes that the obligor may 2 flee it may:

3 (1) As an initiating court, request in its certificate that
4 the responding court obtain the body of the obligor by
5 appropriate process; or

6 (2) As a responding court, obtain the body of the 7 obligor by appropriate process. Thereupon it may release 8 him upon his own recognizance or upon his giving a bond 9 in an amount set by the court to assure his appearance10 at the hearing.

§48-9-17. State information agency.

1 (a) The office of the attorney general is designated as 2 the state information agency under this article. It shall:

3 (1) Compile a list of the courts and their addresses 4 in this state having jurisdiction under this article and 5 transmit it to the state information agency of every other 6 state which has adopted this or a substantially similar 7 law. Upon the adjournment of each session of the Leg-8 islature, the agency shall distribute copies of any amend-9 ments to this article and a statement of their effective 10 date to all other state information agencies;

(2) Maintain a register of lists of courts received from
other states and transmit copies thereof promptly to every
court in this state having jurisdiction under this article;
and

(3) Forward to the court in this state which has jurisdiction over the obligor or his property petitions, certificates and copies of the act it receives from courts or information agencies of other states.

19 (b) If the state information agency does not know the 20 location of the obligor or his property in the state and 21 no state location service is available, it shall use all means 22 at its disposal to obtain this information, including the 23 examination of official records in the state and 24 other sources such as telephone directories, real property 25 records, vital statistics records, police records, requests 26 for the name and address from employers who are able 27 or willing to cooperate, records of motor vehicle license 28 offices, requests made to the tax offices, both state and 29 federal, where such offices are able to cooperate, and re-30 quests made to the social security administration as permitted by the social security act, as amended. 31

§48-9-18. Duty of the court and officials of this state as responding state.

1 (a) After the responding court receives copies of the 2 petition or complaint, certificate and act from the initi3 ating court the clerk of the court shall docket the case4 and notify the prosecuting attorney of his action.

5 (b) The prosecuting attorney shall prosecute the case 6 diligently. He shall take all action necessary in accord-7 ance with the laws of this state to enable the court to 8 obtain jurisdiction over the obligor or his property and 9 shall request the court to set a time and place for a hear-10 ing and give notice thereof to the obligor in accordance 11 with law.

§48-9-19. Further duties of court and officials in the responding state.

1 (a) The prosecuting attorney on his own initiative shall 2 use all means at his disposal to locate the obligor or his 3 property, and if because of inaccuracies in the petition or 4 complaint or otherwise the court cannot obtain jurisdic-5 tion, the prosecuting attorney shall inform the court of 6 what he has done and request the court to continue the 7 case pending receipt of more accurate information or an 8 amended petition or complaint from the initiating court.

9 (b) If the obligor or his property is not found in the 10 county, and the prosecuting attorney discovers that the 11 obligor or his property may be found in another county of 12 this state or in another state, he shall so inform the court. 13 Thereupon, the clerk of the court shall forward the docu-14 ments received from the court in the initiating state to a 15 court in the other county or to a court in the other state 16 or to the information agency or other proper official of the 17 other state with a request that the documents be for-18 warded to the proper court. All powers and duties pro-19 vided by this article apply to the recipient of the docu-20 ments so forwarded. If the clerk of a court of this state 21 forwards documents to another court, he shall forthwith 22 notify the initiating court.

(c) If the prosecuting attorney has no information asto the location of the obligor or his property, he shallso inform the initiating court.

§48-9-20. Hearing and continuance.

1 If the obligee is not present at the hearing and the 2 obligor denies owing the duty of support alleged in the 3 petition or offers evidence constituting a defense, the
4 court shall upon request of either party, continue the
5 hearing to permit evidence relative to the duty to be
6 adduced by either party by deposition or by appearing in
7 person before the court. The court may designate the
8 judge of the initiating court as a person before whom a
9 deposition may be taken.

§48-9-21. Evidence of husband and wife.

1 Laws attaching a privilege against the disclosure of 2 communications between husband and wife are inappli-3 cable to proceedings under this article. Husband and 4 wife are competent witnesses and may be compelled to 5 testify to any relevant matter, including marriage and 6 parentage.

§48-9-22. Rules of evidence.

1 In any hearing for the civil enforcement of this article, 2 the court is governed by the rules of evidence applicable 3 in a civil action in a court of record. If the action is 4 based on a support order issued by another court a certi-5 fied copy of the order shall be received as evidence of the 6 duty of support, subject only to any defenses available 7 to an obligor with respect to paternity or to a defendant 8 in an action or a proceeding to enforce a foreign money 9 judgment. The determination or enforcement of a duty 10 of support owed to one obligee is unaffected by any 11 interference by another obligee with rights of custody or 12 visitation granted by a court.

§48-9-23. Order of support.

1 If the responding court finds a duty of support, it may 2 order the obligor to furnish support or reimbursement 3 therefor and subject the property of the obligor to the 4 order. Support orders made pursuant to this article shall 5 require that payments be made to the clerk of the court 6 of the responding state. The court and prosecuting at-7 torney of any county in which the obligor is present or 8 has property have the same powers and duties to enforce 9 the order as have those of the county in which it was 10 first issued. If enforcement is impossible or cannot be 11 completed in the county in which the order was issued, 12 the prosecuting attorney shall send a certified copy of the 13 order to the prosecuting attorney of any county in which 14 it appears that proceedings to enforce the order would be 15 effective. The prosecuting attorney to whom the certified 16 copy of the order is forwarded shall proceed with enforce-17 ment and report the results of the proceedings to the 18 court first issuing the order.

§48-9-24. Responding court to transmit copies to initiating court.

1 The responding court shall cause a copy of all support 2 orders to be sent to the initiating court.

§48-9-25. Additional powers of responding court.

1 In addition to the foregoing powers, a responding court 2 may subject the obligor to any terms and conditions 3 proper to assure compliance with its orders and in par-4 ticular to:

5 (1) Require the obligor to furnish a cash deposit or a 6 bond of a character and amount to assure payment of 7 any amount due;

8 (2) Require the obligor to report personally and to
9 make payments at specified intervals to the clerk of the
10 court; and

(3) Punish under the power of contempt the obligorwho violates any order of the court.

§48-9-26. Paternity.

1 If the obligor asserts as a defense that he is not the father of the child for whom support is sought and it 2 3 appears to the court that the defense is not frivolous, 4 and if both of the parties are present at the hearing or the proof required in the case indicates that the presence 5 6 of either or both of the parties is not necessary, the court may adjudicate the paternity issue. Otherwise the court 7 may adjourn the hearing until the paternity issue has 8 9 been adjudicated.

§48-9-27. Additional duties of responding court.

- 1 A responding court has the following duties which may
- 2 be carried out through the clerk of the court:

3 (1) To transmit to the initiating court any payment
4 made by the obligor pursuant to any order of the court
5 or otherwise; and

6 (2) To furnish to the initiating court upon request a 7 certified statement of all payments made by the obligor.

§48-9-28. Additional duty of initiating court.

1 An initiating court shall receive and disburse forth-2 with all payments made by the obligor or sent by the re-3 sponding court. This duty may be carried out through 4 the clerk of the court.

§48-9-29. Proceedings not to be stayed.

1 A responding court shall not stay the proceeding or 2 refuse a hearing under this article because of any pend-3 ing or prior action or proceeding for divorce, separation, 4 annulment, dissolution, habeas corpus, adoption or cus-5 tody in this or any other state. The court shall hold a 6 hearing and may issue a support order pendente lite. In 7 aid thereof it may require the obligor to give a bond for 8 the prompt prosecution of the pending proceeding. If the 9 other action or proceeding is concluded before the hear-10 ing in the instant proceeding and the judgment therein 11 provides for the support demanded in the petition or 12 complaint being heard the court must conform its sup-13 port order to the amount allowed in the other action 14 or proceeding. Thereafter the court shall not stay en-15 forcement of its support order because of the retention 16 of jurisdiction for enforcement purposes by the court in 17 the other action or proceeding.

§48-9-30. Application of payments.

1 A support order made by a court of this state pursuant 2 to this article does not nullify and is not nullified by a support order made by a court of this state pursuant to any 3 4 other law or by a support order made by a court of any 5 other state pursuant to a substantially similar law or any 6 other law, regardless of priority of issuance, unless other-7 wise specifically provided by the court. Amounts paid 8 for a particular period pursuant to any support order 9 made by the court of another state shall be credited

Enr. S. B. No. 123]

- 10 against amounts accruing or accrued for the same period
- 11 under any support order made by the court of this state.

§48-9-31. Effect of participation in proceeding.

- 1 Participation in any proceeding under this article does
- 2 not confer jurisdiction upon any court over any of the
- 3 parties thereto in any other proceeding.

§48-9-32. Intrastate application.

This article applies if both the obligee and the obligor 1 are in this state but in different counties. If the court of 2 3 the county in which the petition or complaint is filed 4 finds that the petition or complaint sets forth facts from 5 which it may be determined that the obligor owes a 6 duty of support and finds that a court of another county 7 in this state may obtain jurisdiction over the obligor or 8 his property, the clerk of the court shall send the petition 9 or complaint and a certification of the findings to the 10 court of the county in which the obligor or his property 11 is found. The clerk of the court of the county receiving 12 these documents shall notify the prosecuting attorney of 13 their receipt. The prosecuting attorney and the court in 14 the county in which the copies are forwarded then shall 15 have duties corresponding to those imposed upon them 16 when acting for this state as a responding state.

§48-9-33. Appeals.

1 If the attorney general is of the opinion that a support 2 order is erroneous and presents a question of law war-3 ranting an appeal in the public interest, he may:

4 (a) Perfect an appeal to the proper appellate court if
5 the support order was issued by a court of this state, or
6 (b) If the support order was issued in another state,
7 cause the appeal to be taken in the other state. In
8 either case expenses of appeal may be paid on his order
9 from funds appropriated for his office.

§48-9-34. Additional remedies.

1 If the duty of support is based on a foreign support 2 order, the obligee has the additional remedies provided

3 in sections thirty-five through thirty-nine of this article.

§48-9-35. Registration.

- 1 The obligee may register the foreign support order in a
- 2 court of this state in the manner, with the effect, and for
- 3 the purposes herein provided.

§48-9-36. Registry of foreign support orders.

- 1 The clerk of the court shall maintain a registry of
- 2 foreign support orders in which he shall file foreign sup-
- 3 port orders.

§48-9-37. Official to represent obligee.

- 1 If this state is acting either as a rendering or a register-
- 2 ing state the prosecuting attorney upon the request of
- 3 the court or the state department of welfare shall repre-
- 4 sent the obligee in proceedings under sections thirty-four
- 5 through thirty-nine of this article.

§48-9-38. Registration procedure; notice.

1 (a) An obligee seeking to register a foreign support order in a court of this state shall transmit to the clerk 2 3 of the court (1) three certified copies of the order with 4 all modifications thereof, (2) one copy of the reciprocal 5 enforcement of support law of the state in which the 6 order was made, and (3) a statement verified and signed by the obligee, showing the post-office address of the 7 obligee, the last known place of residence and post-office 8 9 address of the obligor, the amount of support remaining 10 unpaid, a description and the location of any property of 11 the obligor available upon execution, and a list of the 12 states in which the order is registered. Upon receipt of 13 these documents the clerk of the court, without payment 14 of a filing fee or other cost to the obligee, shall file them 15 in the registry of foreign support orders. The filing constitutes registration under this article. 16

17 (b) Promptly upon registration the clerk of the court 18 shall send by certified or registered mail to the obligor 19 at the address given a notice of the registration with a 20 copy of the registered support order and the post-office 21 address of the obligee. He shall also docket the case and 22 notify the prosecuting attorney of his action. The prose23 cuting attorney shall proceed diligently to enforce the 24 order.

§48-9-39. Effect of registration; enforcement procedure.

1 (a) Upon registration, the registered foreign support 2 order shall be treated in the same manner as a support 3 order issued by a court of this state. It has the same 4 effect and is subject to the same procedures, defenses and 5 proceedings for reopening, vacating or staying as a sup-6 port order of this state and may be enforced and satisfied 7 in like manner.

8 (b) The obligor has twenty days after the mailing of
9 notice of the registration in which to petition the court to
10 vacate the registration or for other relief. If he does not
11 so petition the registered support order is confirmed.

12 (c) At the hearing to enforce the registered support order the obligor may present only matters that would be 13 14 available to him as defenses in an action to enforce a 15 foreign money judgment. If he shows to the court that an 16 appeal from the order is pending or will be taken or that a stay of execution has been granted, the court shall stay 17 18 enforcement of the order until the appeal is concluded, the time for appeal has expired, or the order is vacated, 19 20upon satifactory proof that the obligor has furnished 21 security for payment of the support ordered as required 22 by the rendering state. If he shows to the court any 23 ground upon which enforcement of a support order of 24 this state may be stayed the court shall stay enforcement of the order for an appropriate period if the obligor 2526 furnishes the same security for payment of the support ordered that is required for a support order of this state. 27

§48-9-40. Uniformity of interpretation.

- 1 This article shall be so construed as to effectuate its
- 2 general purpose to make uniform the law of those states
- 3 which enact a substantially similar law.

§48-9-41. Short title.

- 1 This article may be cited as the "Revised Uniform
- 2 Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act."

§48-9-42. Severability.

1 If any provision of this article or the application there-

2 of to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the in-

3 validity does not affect other provisions or applications of

4 this article, and to this end the provisions of this article

5 are severable.

Enr. S. B. No. 123]

The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Li 19 all Chairman Senate Committee Chairman House Committee

Originated in the Senate.

To take effect ninety days from passage.

Howard Wharm

Clerk of the Senate

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Clerk of the House of Delegates

E. Man malaurt

President of the Senate

Speaker House of Delegates

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PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR

Date 3/17/12 Time 1:00p.m.