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Montco Sheriff's Department and Domestic Relations Office announce one-week amnesty program for delinquent child support payments

Norristown, Pa., (May 29, 2013) – Parents who are delinquent on child support payments and have outstanding bench warrants will be able to avoid arrest, prosecution and penalties, by turning themselves into the County Domestic Relations Office, during a one-week amnesty period beginning June 10th. County officials made the announcement on Wednesday morning during a press conference at the Montgomery County Courthouse.

Letters to the delinquent parents went out earlier this week regarding the amnesty program, which is being offered during business hours from June 10, 2013 to June 14, 2013 in a collaborative effort between the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department, the Domestic Relations Office and the Court of Common Pleas.

“We currently have approximately 300 outstanding warrants that represent \$5.7 million dollars in back child support payments,” said Sheriff Eileen Behr. “Many of these people are probably not fulfilling other responsibilities or are breaking laws to remain in hiding in an effort to avoid punishment.”

At the top the “Domestic Relations Most Wanted for Child Support” list are parents that owe \$55,000 and \$44,000.

Director of Domestic Relations, Gary Kline said he wants delinquent parents to be proactive in dealing with child support issues so that they can resume their lives and hopefully continue to act as responsible citizens and parents.

“We’ve suspended their licenses — in some cases we’ve suspended professional licenses,” Kline said. “We can work with them to restore those licenses. We’re asking that they come in and make payment arrangements to start paying support for the children that the money is owed to.”

Enforcement Unit Assistant Director Rebecca Colantuno and Sheriff Behr answered questions and confirmed that delinquent parents who fail to make payment arrangements will be aggressively apprehended, arrested by Sheriff’s Department deputies, and could face up to six months in prison.

Delinquent parents could also jeopardize professional occupational licenses; be reported to the credit bureaus; have a lien placed on their property; have federal and state income tax refunds intercepted; have their names, addresses and available photographs sent to area media outlets for publication; and be referred to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for prosecution, if residing outside of the Commonwealth.

While county officials strongly encourage child support delinquents to cooperate and be proactive during the amnesty period, Dep. Joanne Plasterer of the County Warrant Division said that parents who turn themselves in before or after the amnesty period, will be subject to the normal legal process and could still be taken into custody.

Delinquent parents who want to turn themselves in during amnesty week may report to the Montgomery County Domestic Relations Office, One Montgomery Plaza, Swede and Airy Sts., Norristown, Pa., between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Anonymous tips may be reported by calling the Sheriff Department’s TIP LINE at 610-278-3340 or by filling out the online “Submit a Tip” form at www.montcopa.org/FormCenter/Sheriffs-department-8/Submit-a-Tip-45, or by sending an email to sheriffwarrant@montcopa.org.

The “Domestic Relations Most Wanted for Child Support” list is available at www.montcopa.org/sheriff by clicking on the link “Wanted Persons.”