

# **Child Support Enforcement: Comparing California's Performance**

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LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

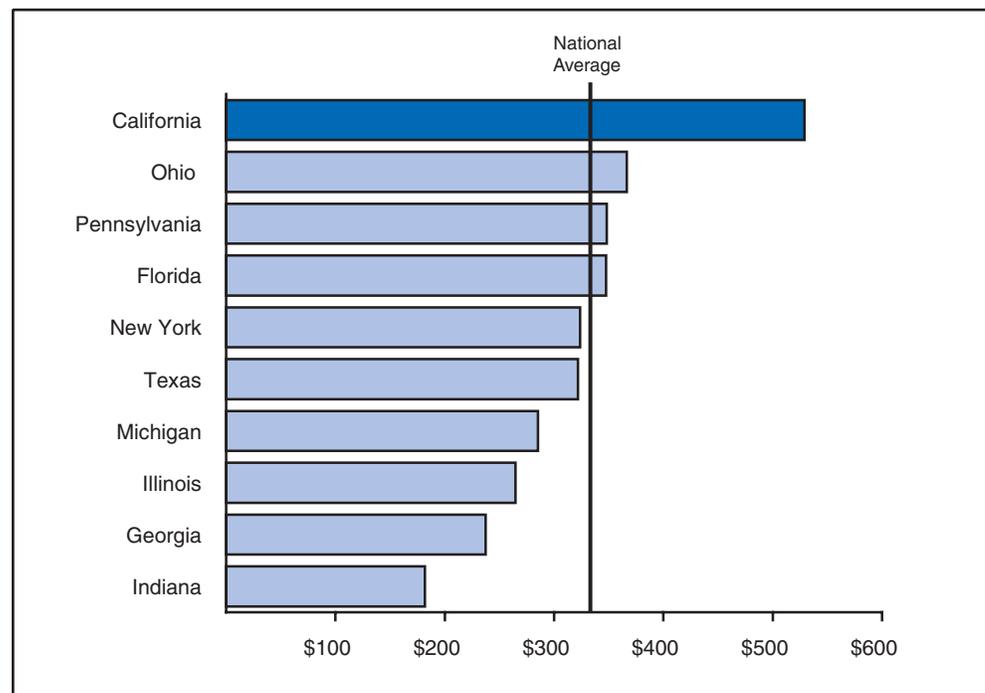
Presented To:  
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review  
Subcommittee No. 3





## California Spends Significantly More Per Case Than Most Other States

### Top Ten States—Expenditures Per Case *Federal Fiscal Year 2003*

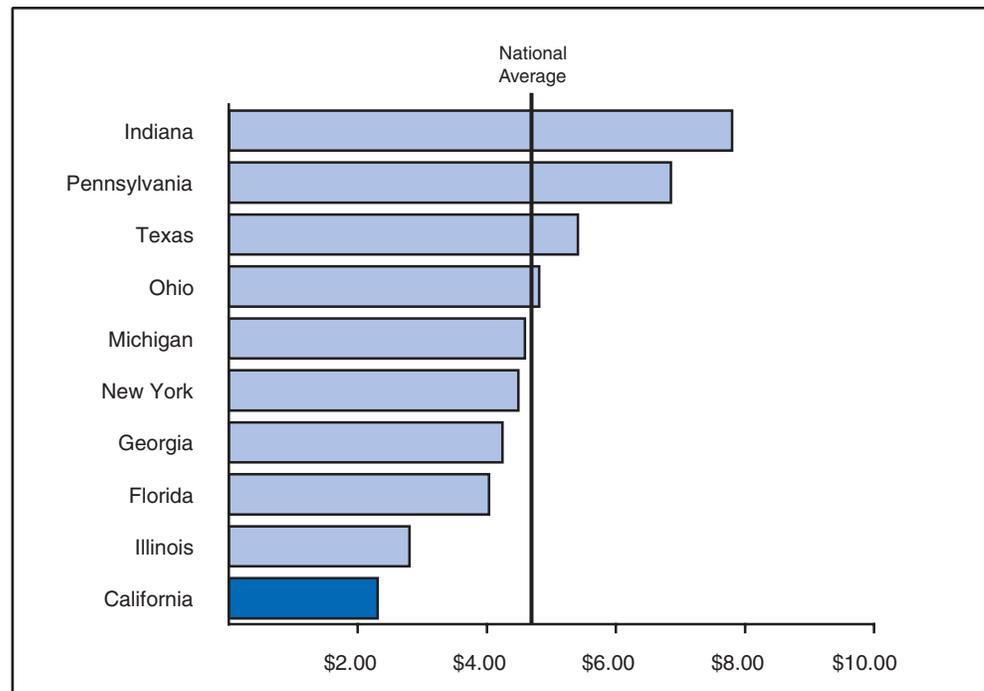


- In 2003, California spent \$529 per child support case. The national average for that year was \$324.
- In 2003, California was the third highest state in the nation in its spending per case. Only New Mexico (\$616) and Minnesota (\$583) spent more.
- The proposed child support budget for 2005-06 provides a funding level of \$592 per child support case.



# Despite Investment in Program, California Struggles With Cost-Effectiveness

## Ten Largest States—Cost-Effectiveness *Federal Fiscal Year 2003*

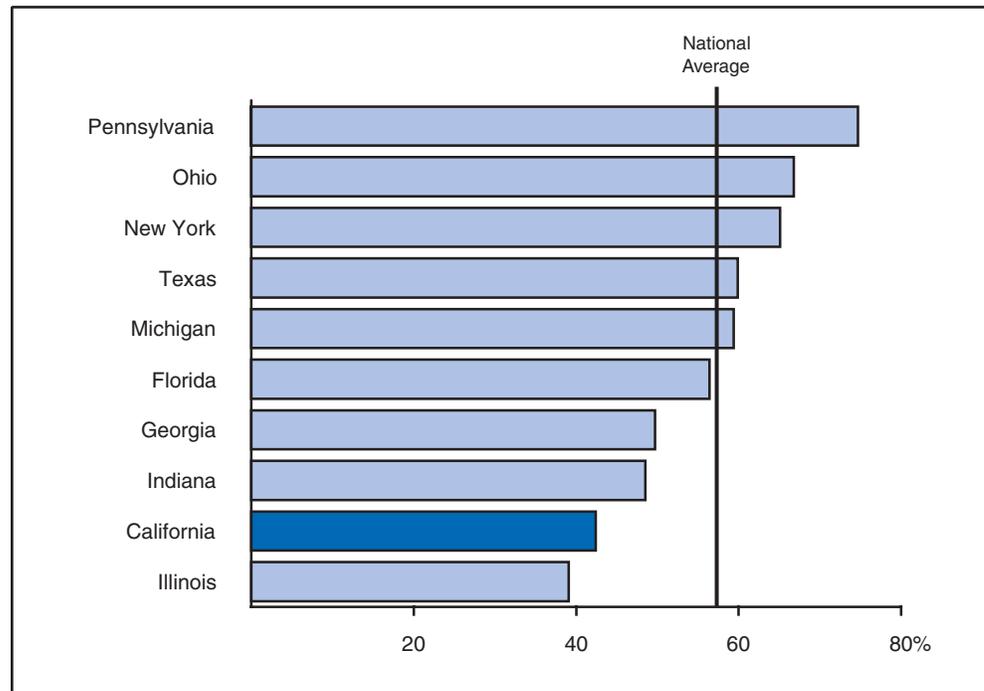


- In 2003, California collected \$2.31 for every dollar spent on child support enforcement. The national average for that year was \$4.33.
- In 2003, California was 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in cost-effectiveness.
- California's 2004 performance shows cost-effectiveness declining to \$2.12. The decline in 2004 is due to increased spending on the statewide automation project.
- The federal minimum requirement for cost-effectiveness is \$2.



## California Just Above Minimum Federal Standard for Collecting Current Child Support

### Ten Largest States— Collection of Current Child Support *Federal Fiscal Year 2003*

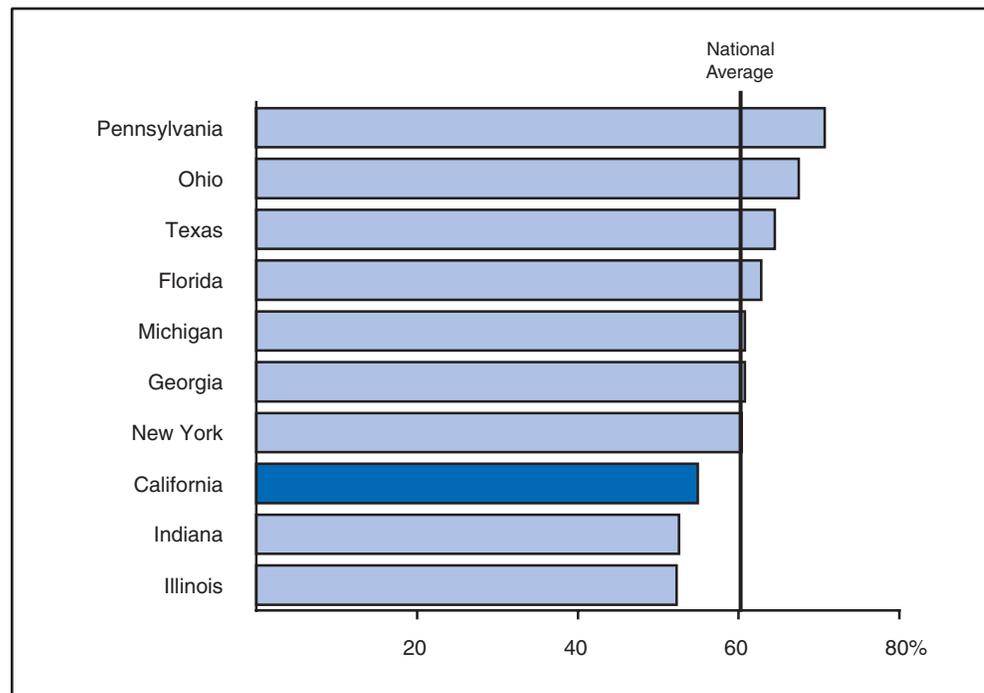


- The federal government requires a minimum of 40 percent of current child support to be collected.
- In 2003, California ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation in its ability to collect money owed to families with current child support orders, collecting 45 percent of the money owed.
- California has hovered close to minimum acceptable levels for 2000 through 2002. Some progress has been made in the last two years.
- In 2004, California improved its rate and collected 48 percent of the current child support that was owed.



## California's Noncustodial Parents Owe Billions in Past-Due Child Support

### Ten Largest States— Collections on Past-Due Child Support *Federal Fiscal Year 2003*



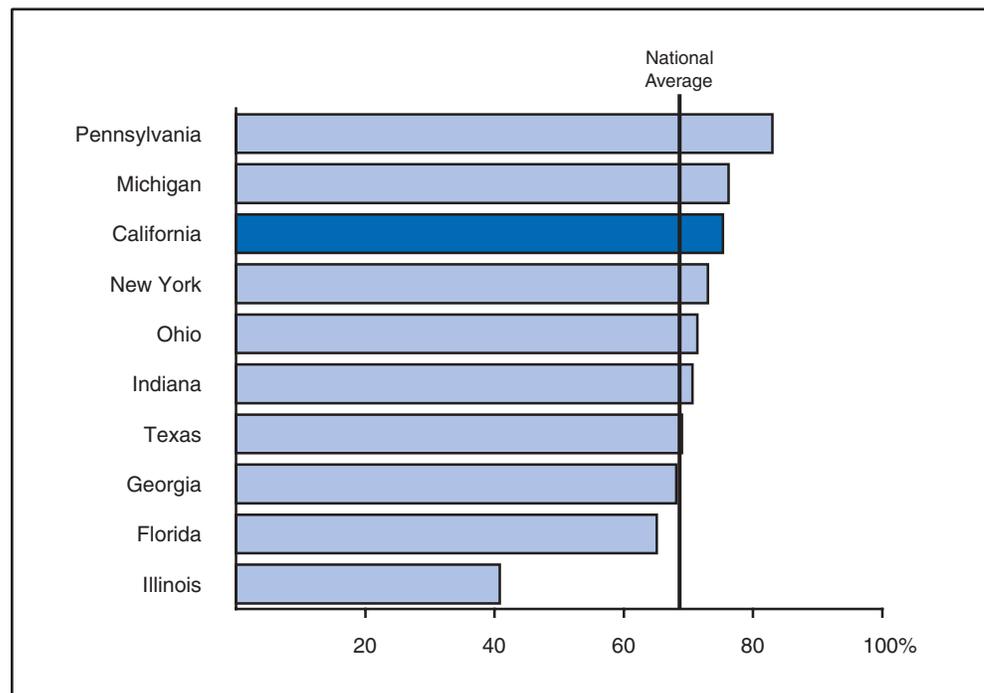
- This performance indicator measures the percentage of families that have some or all of their past-due child support collected during the year.
- Over 1.2 million families in California have not been paid all of the child support they are owed. California is collecting some of that past-due amount for 55 percent of those families (665,000 cases). However, \$18.9 billion in past-due child support remains uncollected in California.
- In 2003, California ranked 41<sup>st</sup> in the nation in its ability to collect past-due child support owed to families.



## California Above Average in Establishing Child Support Orders

### Ten Largest States— Cases With Child Support Orders

*Federal Fiscal Year 2003*



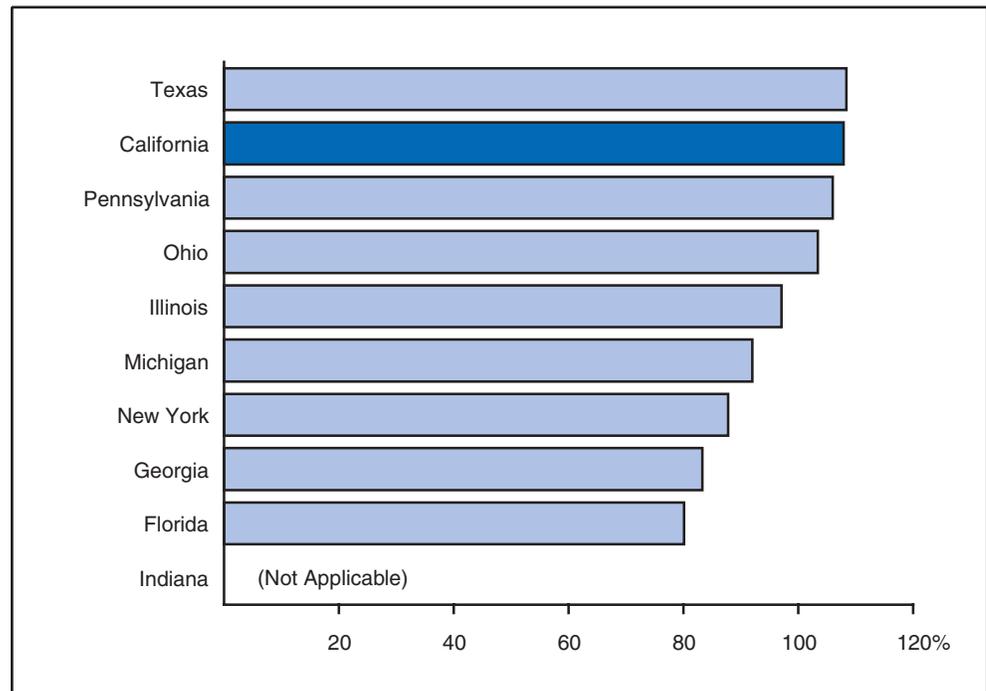
- Child support orders legally obligate noncustodial parents to provide financial support for their children and set the amount of that obligation.
- In 2003, California ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in establishing child support orders for its clients. 76 percent of the cases had a support order.
- By 2004, performance has increased as orders have now been established for 78 percent of the cases.



## California Among Leading States in the Establishment of Paternity

### Ten Largest States— Paternity Establishment Performance

*Federal Fiscal Year 2003*



- Paternity establishment allows children to have a legal claim to their father's income.
- California ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation in 2003 for establishing the paternity for its children.