

New criminal initiative aimed at parents who continually don't pay child support

Written by George Browning
Tuesday, 04 February 2014 00:00 -

Not paying child support in Scott County is a very bad habit.

And non-custodial parents who continually do not pay their obligations to support their children will find themselves the target of a new criminal initiative of the Scott County Prosecutor's Office.

Three Class C felony cases were filed by the Prosecutor's Office on Thursday, January 30, in Circuit Court against men who have racked up big bucks owed to their families for non-support. These first three defendants are David Combs, 39, Austin; Mickey A. Noel, 34, Scottsburg; and Albert L. Sharp Jr., 47, North Vernon. All have been charged with one count of non-support of a dependent.

Combs, Sharp and Noel have accumulated over 35 total years of unpaid support, according to court documents.

In a probable cause affidavit filed with his case, Sharp has amassed a child support arrearage of \$41,330.85. He was supposed to pay \$60 per week support but has not paid any since January, 2009. To be released from jail on other, unrelated charges, Sharp paid bonds of \$1,500 and \$1,150 as well as \$300 for court fees in 2012 and 2013, records indicate.

Noel's arrearage was next highest of the three filed. He owes \$52,463 in missed payments he was to make per week of \$91. He has not paid support since December, 2006.

Combs' arrearage is a staggering \$86,594.03, amassed from missed payments of \$125 per week ordered back in November, 1999.

The three have been brought before court officials several times over the span of missed payments, each time ordered to pay weekly payments ordered as well as toward their arrearages.

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Now, they face criminal charges. Bail in each case is set at \$50,000 corporate surety bond or \$5,000 cash. A warrant was issued for each man's arrest on Thursday.

"We will be filing felony criminal charges on individuals who continuously fail to pay child support. Obviously, our ultimate goal is to collect support for the children involved in child support matters, not to immediately throw people in jail.

However, if an individual is going long stretches of time without paying support, our office is going to take notice. If a non-custodial parent has accumulated a significant child support arrearage, we will pursue enforcement," stated Prosecutor Jason Mount.

In Indiana, a non-custodial parent who knowingly fails to pay child support can be charged with nonsupport of a dependent, a Class D felony. The charge can be enhanced to a C felony if the non-custodial parent has a total arrearage of over \$15,000.

The D felony carries a sentence of up to three years in jail; a Class C felony has a sentence of up to eight years. In addition to criminal charges, the Prosecutor's Office may pursue enforcement through civil contempt, which can also carry a jail sentence sanction. Mount stated, "Many children rely on a parent's child support to provide their basic needs. We want non-custodial parents to understand that they need to make every possible effort to provide their children with the financial support they need and deserve."