



Ohio Revised Code

Section 2919.21 Nonsupport or contributing to nonsupport of dependents.

Effective: April 6, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 281

(A) No person shall abandon, or fail to provide adequate support to:

(1) The person's spouse, as required by law;

(2) The person's child who is under age eighteen, or the person's child with a mental or physical disability who is under age twenty-one;

(3) The person's aged or infirm parent or adoptive parent, who from lack of ability and means is unable to provide adequately for the parent's own support.

(B)(1) No person shall abandon, or fail to provide support as established by a court order to, another person whom, by court order or decree, the person:

(a) Is legally obligated to support; or

(b) Was legally obligated to support, and an amount for support:

(i) Was due and owing prior to the date the person's duty to pay current support terminated; and

(ii) Remains unpaid.

(2) The period of limitation under section 2901.13 of the Revised Code applicable to division (B)(1)(b) of this section shall begin to run on the date the person's duty to pay current support terminates.

(C) No person shall aid, abet, induce, cause, encourage, or contribute to a child or a ward of the juvenile court becoming a dependent child, as defined in section 2151.04 of the Revised Code, or a neglected child, as defined in section 2151.03 of the Revised Code.



(D) It is an affirmative defense to a charge of failure to provide adequate support under division (A) of this section or a charge of failure to provide support established by a court order under division (B) of this section that the accused was unable to provide adequate support or the established support but did provide the support that was within the accused's ability and means.

(E) It is an affirmative defense to a charge under division (A)(3) of this section that the parent abandoned the accused or failed to support the accused as required by law, while the accused was under age eighteen, or had a mental or physical disability and was under age twenty-one.

(F) It is not a defense to a charge under division (B) of this section that the person whom a court has ordered the accused to support is being adequately supported by someone other than the accused.

(G)(1) Except as otherwise provided in this division, whoever violates division (A) or (B) of this section is guilty of nonsupport of dependents, a misdemeanor of the first degree. If the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of division (A)(2) or (B) of this section or if the offender has failed to provide support under division (A)(2) or (B) of this section for a total accumulated period of twenty-six weeks out of one hundred four consecutive weeks, whether or not the twenty-six weeks were consecutive, then a violation of division (A)(2) or (B) of this section is a felony of the fifth degree. If the offender previously has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a felony violation of this section, a violation of division (A)(2) or (B) of this section is a felony of the fourth degree.

If the violation of division (A) or (B) of this section is a felony, all of the following apply to the sentencing of the offender:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in division (G)(1)(b) of this section, the court in imposing sentence on the offender shall first consider placing the offender on one or more community control sanctions under section 2929.16, 2929.17, or 2929.18 of the Revised Code, with an emphasis under the sanctions on intervention for nonsupport, obtaining or maintaining employment, or another related condition.

(b) The preference for placement on community control sanctions described in division (G)(1)(a) of



this section does not apply to any offender to whom one or more of the following applies:

- (i) The court determines that the imposition of a prison term on the offender is consistent with the purposes and principles of sentencing set forth in section 2929.11 of the Revised Code.
 - (ii) The offender previously was convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of this section that was a felony, and the offender was sentenced to a prison term for that violation.
 - (iii) The offender previously was convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of this section that was a felony, the offender was sentenced to one or more community control sanctions of a type described in division (G)(1)(a) of this section for that violation, and the offender failed to comply with the conditions of any of those community control sanctions.
- (2) If the offender is guilty of nonsupport of dependents by reason of failing to provide support to the offender's child as required by a child support order issued on or after April 15, 1985, pursuant to section 2151.23, 2151.231, 2151.232, 2151.33, 3105.21, 3109.05, 3111.13, 3113.04, 3113.31, 3115.401, or former section 3115.31 of the Revised Code, the court, in addition to any other sentence imposed, shall assess all court costs arising out of the charge against the person and require the person to pay any reasonable attorney's fees of any adverse party other than the state, as determined by the court, that arose in relation to the charge.
- (3) Whoever violates division (C) of this section is guilty of contributing to the nonsupport of dependents, a misdemeanor of the first degree. Each day of violation of division (C) of this section is a separate offense.