

§ 50-13.13. Motion or claim for relief from child support order based on finding of nonpaternity.

(a) Notwithstanding G.S. 1A-1, Rule 60 of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure, or any other provision of law, an individual who, as the father of a child, is required to pay child support under an order that was entered by a North Carolina court pursuant to Chapter 49, 50, 52C, or 110 of the General Statutes, or under an agreement between the parties pursuant to G.S. 52-10.1 or otherwise, and that is subject to modification by a North Carolina court under applicable law may file a motion or claim seeking relief from a child support order as provided in this section.

(b) A motion or claim for relief under this section shall be filed as a motion or claim in the cause in the pending child support action, or as an independent civil action, and shall be filed within one year of the date the moving party knew or reasonably should have known that he was not the father of the child. The motion or claim shall be verified by the moving party and shall state all of the following:

- (1) The basis, with particularity, on which the moving party believes that he is not the child's father.
- (2) The moving party has not acknowledged paternity of the child or acknowledged paternity without knowing that he was not the child's biological father.
- (3) The moving party has not adopted the child, has not legitimated the child pursuant to G.S. 49-10, 49-12, or 49-12.1, or is not the child's legal father pursuant to G.S. 49A-1.
- (4) The moving party did not act to prevent the child's biological father from asserting his paternal rights regarding the child.

(c) The court may appoint a guardian ad litem pursuant to G.S. 1A-1, Rule 17, to represent the interest of the child in connection with a proceeding under this section.

(d) Notwithstanding G.S. 8-50.1(b1), the court shall, upon motion or claim of a party in a proceeding under this section, order the moving party, the child's mother, and the child to submit to genetic paternity testing if the court finds that there is good cause to believe that the moving party is not the child's father and that the moving party may be entitled to relief under this section. If genetic paternity testing is ordered, the provisions of G.S. 8-50.1(b1) shall govern the admissibility and weight of the genetic test results. The moving party shall pay the costs of genetic testing. If a party fails to comply with an order for genetic testing without good cause, the court may hold the party in civil or criminal contempt or impose appropriate sanctions under G.S. 1A-1, Rule 37, of the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure, or both. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require additional genetic paternity testing if paternity has been set aside pursuant to G.S. 49-14 or G.S. 110-132.

(e) The moving party's child support obligation shall be suspended while the motion or claim is pending before the court if the support is being paid on behalf of the child to the State, or any other assignee of child support, where the child is in the custody of the State or other assignee, or where the moving party is an obligor in a IV-D case as defined in G.S. 110-129(7).

The moving party's child support obligation shall not be suspended while the motion or claim is pending before the court if the support is being paid to the mother of the child.

(f) The court may grant relief from a child support order under this section if paternity has been set aside pursuant to G.S. 49-14 or G.S. 110-132, or if the moving party proves by clear and convincing evidence, and the court, sitting without a jury, finds both of the following:

- (1) The results of a valid genetic test establish that the moving party is not the child's biological father.

- (2) The moving party either (i) has not acknowledged paternity of the child or (ii) acknowledged paternity without knowing that he was not the child's biological father. For purposes of this section, "acknowledging paternity" means that the moving party has done any of the following:
 - a. Publicly acknowledged the child as his own and supported the child while married to the child's mother.
 - b. Acknowledged paternity in a sworn written statement, including an affidavit of parentage executed under G.S. 110-132(a) or G.S. 130A-101(f).
 - c. Executed a consent order, a voluntary support agreement under G.S. 110-132 or G.S. 110-133, or any other legal agreement to pay child support as the child's father.
 - d. Admitted paternity in open court or in any pleading.

(g) If the court determines that the moving party has not satisfied the requirements of this section, the court shall deny the motion or claim, and all orders regarding the child's paternity, support, or custody shall remain enforceable and in effect until modified as otherwise provided by law. If the court finds that the moving party did not act in good faith in filing a motion or claim pursuant to this section, the court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees to the prevailing party. The court shall make findings of fact and conclusions of law to support its award of attorneys' fees under this subsection.

(h) If the court determines that the moving party has satisfied the requirements of this section, the court shall enter an order, including written findings of fact and conclusions of law, terminating the moving party's child support obligation regarding the child. The court may tax as costs to the mother of the child the expenses of genetic testing.

Any unpaid support due prior to the filing of the motion or claim is due and owing. If the court finds that the mother of the child used fraud, duress, or misrepresentation, resulting in the belief on the part of the moving party that he was the father of the child, the court may order the mother of the child to reimburse any child support amounts paid and received by the mother after the filing of the motion or claim. The moving party has no right to reimbursement of past child support paid on behalf of the child to the State, or any other assignee of child support, where the child is in the custody of the State or other assignee, or where the moving party is an obligor in a IV-D case as defined in G.S. 110-129(7).

If the child was born in North Carolina and the moving party is named as the father on the child's birth certificate, the court shall order the clerk of superior court to notify the State Registrar of the court's order pursuant to G.S. 130A-118(b)(2). If relief is granted under this subsection, a party may, to the extent otherwise provided by law, apply for modification of or relief from any judgment or order involving the moving party's paternity of the child.

(i) Any servicemember who is deployed on military orders, and is subject to the protections of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, shall have the period for filing a motion pursuant to subsection (b) of this section tolled during the servicemember's deployment. If the period remaining allowed for the filing of the motion following the servicemember's redeployment is less than 30 days, then the servicemember shall have 30 days for filing the motion. (2011-328, s. 3.)