

# CALIFORNIA LAW REVISION COMMISSION

## TENTATIVE RECOMMENDATION

### Enforcement of Judgments Under the Family Code: Technical Revisions

April 1999

This tentative recommendation is being distributed so that interested persons will be advised of the Commission's tentative conclusions and can make their views known to the Commission. Any comments sent to the Commission will be a part of the public record and will be considered at a public meeting when the Commission determines the provisions it will include in legislation the Commission plans to recommend to the Legislature. It is just as important to advise the Commission that you approve the tentative recommendation as it is to advise the Commission that you believe revisions should be made in the tentative recommendation.

**COMMENTS ON THIS TENTATIVE RECOMMENDATION SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY THE COMMISSION NOT LATER THAN August 31, 1999.**

The Commission often substantially revises tentative recommendations as a result of the comments it receives. Hence, this tentative recommendation is not necessarily the recommendation the Commission will submit to the Legislature.

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## SUMMARY OF TENTATIVE RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation proposes a number of technical revisions to coordinate the rules in the Code of Civil Procedure and Family Code relating to enforceability and renewal of judgments under the Family Code, including judgments for support and judgments for possession or sale of property. The proposed legislation is not intended to make major substantive changes, but to eliminate overlapping and confusing rules and clarify some doubtful areas.

This recommendation was prepared pursuant to Resolution Chapter 91 of the Statutes of 1998.



1 law that the court has discretion as to the manner of enforcement of judgments.<sup>5</sup>  
2 Nevertheless, some of the benefits of the scheme in the Enforcement of Judgments  
3 Law were extended to the Family Law Act by providing that judgments for child  
4 or spousal support could be enforced by a writ of execution *without* the need for a  
5 court order so long as the amounts owing were not more than 10 years overdue —  
6 after 10 years, overdue support payments were enforceable only in the court’s dis-  
7 cretion, and lack of diligence was to be considered in determining whether to per-  
8 mit enforcement.<sup>6</sup> The 10-year period ran as to each installment when it fell due.<sup>7</sup>

### 9 **Revisions of the Original Scheme**

10 In 1986, Section 4384.5 was added to the Civil Code providing that a judgment  
11 for child or spousal support could be renewed by application under the general  
12 procedures in the Enforcement of Judgments Law.<sup>8</sup> This section created the situa-  
13 tion whereby the Enforcement of Judgments Law provided that the ministerial  
14 renewal procedure did not apply to the Family Law Act<sup>9</sup> and the Family Law Act  
15 provided that the procedure could be used to renew enforceability of child or  
16 spousal support obligations.<sup>10</sup> Effectively, however, the ministerial renewal would  
17 only affect enforcement by execution, since other types of enforcement required  
18 application for a court order.<sup>11</sup>

19 In 1987, Civil Code Section 4383 was amended to permit enforcement of child  
20 or family support by execution, without prior court approval, until five years after  
21 the child reaches the age of majority, and thereafter for amounts not more than 10  
22 years overdue.<sup>12</sup> The 10-year rule was retained for enforcement of spousal support  
23 by a writ of execution.

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5. See former Civ. Code § 4380 (see now Fam. Code § 290).

6. See former Civ. Code §§ 4383-4384, as enacted by 1982 Cal. Stat. ch. 497, §§ 15-16.

7. See former Civ. Code § 4384 (see now Fam. Code § 5102).

8. See former Civ. Code § 4384.5, as enacted by 1986 Cal. Stat. ch. 1046, § 1:

4384.5. Any party may renew a judgment for child or spousal support by filing an application for renewal of the judgment in the manner specified in Article 2 (commencing with Section 683.110) of Title 9 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Notwithstanding subdivision (b) of Section 683.110 of the Code of Civil Procedure, such a judgment shall not be renewed if the application is filed within five years from the time the judgment was previously renewed.

The meaning of the second sentence is unclear since it repeats the five-year limitation on frequency of ministerial renewals provided in Code of Civil Procedure Section 683.110(b). The 1986 version of Section 4384.5 was repealed and replaced by a new section of the same number. See 1992 Cal. Stat. ch. 718, § 3, discussed *infra*.

9. Code Civ. Proc. § 683.310. In 1991, Section 683.310 was amended to recognize the exception provided by former Civil Code Section 4384.5. 1991 Cal. Stat. ch. 110, § 15.

10. Former Civ. Code § 4384.5.

11. Former Civ. Code § 4380.

12. See former Civ. Code § 4383, as amended by 1987 Cal. Stat. ch. 960, § 1. See also *In re Marriage of Wight*, 215 Cal. App. 3d 1590, 1594 n.4, 264 Cal. Rptr. 508 (1989).

1 Thus, by 1988, the Family Law Act had a hybrid system. The 10-year rule was  
2 no longer related to enforceability and renewal requirements, but only served as a  
3 limitation on the discretion of the court, making enforcement by writ of execution  
4 a procedural right for amounts not more than 10 years overdue (or more in the case  
5 of child and family support involving a child age 23 or less). Amounts more than  
6 10 years overdue continued to be enforceable in the court's discretion without any  
7 renewal requirement.

8 It should also be noted that the renewal scheme in the Enforcement of Judgments  
9 Law, generally applicable to judgments for possession or sale, was also inappli-  
10 cable to these types of judgments under the Family Law Act. In addition, there was  
11 no exception for enforcement by writ as in the case of support enforcement.

12 This situation changed dramatically in 1992 when the 1986 version of Civil  
13 Code Section 4384.5 was replaced by a new rule providing that judgments for  
14 child or spousal support or for arrearages are completely exempt from any renewal  
15 requirement and are enforceable until paid in full.<sup>13</sup> In essence, although stated  
16 quite differently, the 1992 amendments to the Family Law Act returned the  
17 renewal and enforceability rules to their pre-1986 status. In other words, the 10-  
18 year limitations on enforceability and the ministerial renewal procedure did not  
19 apply to support judgments.

20 In 1993, the law was again revised to add a provision for the optional renewal of  
21 support judgments that had been deleted in 1992.<sup>14</sup> The rules concerning judg-  
22 ments for possession or sale of property were not revised.

### 23 **Current Law**

24 In 1992 and 1993, this area of the law was also being reorganized in the course  
25 of creating the new Family Code.<sup>15</sup> As a first step, the interrelated enforcement  
26 provisions were revised or carried over into the new code without substantive  
27 revision.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, confusing an already complicated situation, many of

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13. See former Civ. Code § 4384.5, as enacted by 1992 Cal. Stat. ch. 718, § 3 (see now Fam. Code § 4502); Code Civ. Proc. § 683.130(c), as amended by 1992 Cal. Stat. ch. 718, § 4. The 1992 version of former Civil Code Section 4384.5 provided:

4384.5. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a judgment for child or spousal support, including a judgment for reimbursement or other arrearages, is exempt from any requirement that judgments be renewed. A judgment for child or spousal support, including all lawful interest and penalties computed thereon, is enforceable until paid in full.

14. See Code Civ. Proc. § 683.130(c), as amended by 1993 Cal. Stat. ch. 876, § 8.

15. The Family Code was enacted on Commission recommendation. See 1992 Cal. Stat. ch. 162 (AB 2650); 1992 Cal. Stat. ch. 163 (AB 2641) (conforming revisions); *Family Code*, 22 Cal. L. Revision Comm'n Reports 1 (1992); 1993 Cal. Stat. ch. 219 (AB 1500); 1993 Cal. Stat. ch. 876 (SB 1068) (*passim*); 1994 *Family Code*, 23 Cal. L. Revision Comm'n Reports 1 & 9 n.1 (1993).

16. Code of Civil Procedure Section 683.310 was revised to provide as follows:

683.310. Except as otherwise provided in Section 4502 of the Family Code, this chapter does not apply to a judgment or order made or entered pursuant to the Family Code.

Family Code Section 4502, as enacted in 1992, carried forward the then-existing version of Civil Code Section 4384.5:

1 these rules were undergoing amendment to eliminate the last vestige of the 10-year  
2 rule.<sup>17</sup> Attempts were made to coordinate the Family Code with the ongoing revi-  
3 sions occurring around it in 1993, but the task was not completed and the situation  
4 remains confused.<sup>18</sup>

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4502. A party may renew a judgment for child, family, or spousal support as provided in Article 2 (commencing with Section 683.110) of Chapter 3 of Title 9 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

The special writ of execution rules from former Civil Code Section 4383 were continued in Family Code Sections 5100-5102 and 5103-5104 without substantive change. See *infra* note 18.

17. See 1992 Cal. Stat. ch. 718; 1993 Cal. Stat. ch. 876. These amendments, not sponsored by the Commission, occurred in parallel bills at the same sessions during which the Family Code was created.

18. Family Code Section 4502 was amended in 1993 to pick up the 1992 amendments to Civil Code Section 4384.5. It now provides:

4502. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a judgment for child, family, or spousal support, including a judgment for reimbursement or other arrearages, is exempt from any requirement that judgments be renewed. A judgment for child, family, or spousal support, including all lawful interest and penalties computed thereon, is enforceable until paid in full.

The writ of execution rules from former Civil Code Sections 4383 and 4384, as revised in 1993, read as follows in their Family Code setting (as amended in 1994 and 1997):

**Fam. Code § 5100. Enforcement of child or family support without prior court approval**

5100. Notwithstanding Section 291, a child or family support order may be enforced by a writ of execution or a notice of levy pursuant to Section 706.030 of the Code of Civil Procedure or Section 11350.7 of the Welfare and Institutions Code without prior court approval as long as the support order remains enforceable.

**Fam. Code § 5101. Enforcement of spousal support without prior court approval**

5101. Notwithstanding Section 291, a spousal support order may be enforced by a writ of execution or a notice of levy pursuant to Section 706.030 of the Code of Civil Procedure or Section 11350.7 of the Welfare and Institutions Code without prior court approval as long as the support order remains enforceable.

**Fam. Code § 5102. Period for enforcement of installment payments**

5102. If a support order provides for the payment of support in installments, the period specified pursuant to this chapter runs as to each installment from the date the installment became due.

**Fam. Code § 5103. Enforcement of support against employee benefit plan**

5103. (a) Notwithstanding Section 2060, an order for the payment of child, family, or spousal support may be enforced against an employee benefit plan regardless of whether the plan has been joined as a party to the proceeding in which the support order was obtained.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 697.710 of the Code of Civil Procedure, an execution lien created by a levy on the judgment debtor's right to payment of benefits from an employee benefit plan to enforce an order for the payment of child, family, or spousal support continues until the date the plan has withheld and paid over to the levying officer, as provided in Section 701.010 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the full amount specified in the notice of levy, unless the plan is directed to stop withholding and paying over before that time by court order or by the levying officer.

(c) A writ of execution pursuant to which a levy is made on the judgment debtor's right to payment of benefits from an employee benefit plan under an order for the payment of child, family, or spousal support shall be returned not later than one year after the date the execution lien expires under subdivision (b).

**Fam. Code § 5104. Application for writ**

5104. (a) The application for a writ of execution shall be accompanied by an affidavit stating the total amount due and unpaid that is authorized to be enforced pursuant to Sections 5100 to 5103, inclusive, on the date of the application.

(b) If interest on the overdue installments is sought, the affidavit shall state the total amount of the interest and the amount of each due and unpaid installment and the date it became due.

1 Further legislative efforts in 1997 to improve collection of child support have  
2 resulted in additional amendments to some of the Family Code enforcement provi-  
3 sions without resolving the underlying inconsistencies.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4 **Commission Recommendations**

5 The Commission proposes to reconcile the relationship between the Enforce-  
6 ment of Judgments Law and the Family Code. Existing law is confusing and  
7 potentially misleading.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, the vestiges of the 10-year renewal rule as  
8 applicable to support judgments should be deleted from the Family Code and the  
9 renewal procedure should be made clearly optional. Specifically:

- 10 • The optional support order renewal rules in Code of Civil Procedure Section  
11 683.130 should be moved to Family Code Section 4502 which makes clear  
12 that renewal is not required. This will unify some related rules and avoid the  
13 duplication between these two sections.
- 14 • Code of Civil Procedure Section 683.310 should be amended to eliminate the  
15 cross-reference to Family Code Section 4502, since that section no longer  
16 provides an exception to the general judgment renewal procedure.
- 17 • Family Code Sections 291 (diligence) and 5102 (running of time on install-  
18 ments) should be repealed since there is no longer a limited period of  
19 enforceability.

20 The Commission also recommends making clear that judgments for possession  
21 or sale of property<sup>21</sup> under the Family Code are subject to the general rules govern-

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(c) The affidavit shall be filed in the action and a copy shall be attached to the writ of execution delivered to the levying officer. The levying officer shall serve the copy of the affidavit on the judgment debtor when the writ of execution is first served on the judgment debtor pursuant to a levy under the writ.

The 1994 amendments of Family Code Sections 5100 and 5101 changed the “notwithstanding” clause to refer to Section 291 instead of Section 290. This change is puzzling. The purpose of the notwithstanding clause was to make clear that enforcement by writ of execution was available *without prior court approval*, which is the subject of Section 290. Section 291 provides a diligence factor to be considered by the court when court approval is sought for enforcement *after* the automatic writ enforcement period. Hence, the scope of Section 291 and Sections 5100-5101 are mutually exclusive and the notwithstanding clause is meaningless. Furthermore, as discussed *supra*, the period referred to in Section 291 by incorporation of Section 5100 *et seq.* is nonexistent, since those sections were amended to eliminate the period formerly incorporated.

19. See 1997 Cal. Stat. ch. 599, §§ 19-20 (amending Fam. Code §§ 5100-5101).

20. The contradiction between sections assuming there is a period of enforceability and sections providing that support judgments are enforceable until paid was noted in a recent case. *In re Marriage of Plescia*, 59 Cal. App. 4th 252, 259-62, 69 Cal. Rptr. 2d 120, 124-26 (1997) (doctrine of laches available, even though diligence under Section 291 no longer applicable to spousal support enforcement following elimination of 10-year rule in Section 5101). The proposed revisions are not intended to alter the equitable powers of the court.

For another case with an admirable summary of the changes in the law governing enforcement of support judgments, considered in the context of enforcing a 30-year old spousal support order, see *In re Marriage of Garcia*, 67 Cal. App. 4th 693, 79 Cal. Rptr. 2d 242 (1998).

21. The Family Code should also be amended to make clear that “property” includes both real and personal property, consistent with Code of Civil Procedure Section 680.310 in the Enforcement of Judgments

1 ing the period of enforceability and renewal on a mandatory basis, not on an  
2 optional basis as in the case of support judgments. The general renewal scheme in  
3 the Enforcement of Judgments Law applies to judgments for possession or sale of  
4 property.<sup>22</sup> In recent years, the revisions of the law concerning enforcement and  
5 renewal of judgments under the Family Law Act, and now the Family Code, have  
6 focused on support enforcement, particularly child support. The policies support-  
7 ing that legislation do not apply to enforcement of judgments for possession or  
8 sale of property. Thus, it is appropriate to clarify the law by applying the orderly  
9 general renewal procedure to these judgments.<sup>23</sup>

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Law. See proposed Fam. Code § 113 *infra*. This revision is in response to a concern raised in the Senate Judiciary Committee consultant's analysis of SB 832 in 1995.

22. See Code Civ. Proc. §§ 683.020 (10-year period for enforcement of judgments), 683.110 (renewal of judgments).

23. In 1994, the Commission was informed that at least one judge has refused to exercise discretion under former Civil Code Section 4380 (now Family Code Section 290) on the grounds that the 10-year period of enforceability had expired, notwithstanding that Code of Civil Procedure Section 683.310 makes the general rules inapplicable to such judgments. A party who believes that Section 683.310 excuses compliance with renewal of judgments for sale or possession would not have thought to use the renewal procedure, and may even have concluded that that procedure was not available, since Section 683.130(c) permitting renewal of Family Code judgments refers only to support.

## PROPOSED LEGISLATION

1 **Code Civ. Proc. § 683.130 (amended). Time for filing application for renewal of judgment**

2 SECTION 1. Section 683.130 of the Code of Civil Procedure is amended to  
3 read:

4 683.130. (a) In the case of a lump-sum money judgment or a judgment for  
5 possession or sale of property, the application for renewal of the judgment may be  
6 filed at any time before the expiration of the 10-year period of enforceability  
7 provided by Section 683.020 or, if the judgment is a renewed judgment, at any  
8 time before the expiration of the 10-year period of enforceability of the renewed  
9 judgment provided by Section 683.120.

10 (b) Except as otherwise specified in subdivision (c) , in the case of a money  
11 judgment payable in installments, the application for renewal of the judgment may  
12 be filed:

13 (1) If the judgment has not previously been renewed, at any time as to past due  
14 amounts that at the time of filing are not barred by the expiration of the 10-year  
15 period of enforceability provided by Sections 683.020 and 683.030.

16 (2) If the judgment has previously been renewed, within the time specified by  
17 subdivision (a) as to the amount of the judgment as previously renewed and, as to  
18 any past due amounts that became due and payable after the previous renewal, at  
19 any time before the expiration of the 10-year period of enforceability provided by  
20 Sections 683.020 and 683.030.

21 ~~(c)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a judgment for child support,~~  
22 ~~spousal support, or family support, or a judgment for reimbursement that includes,~~  
23 ~~but is not limited to, reimbursement arising under Section 11350 of the Welfare~~  
24 ~~and Institutions Code or other arrearages, and including all lawful interest and~~  
25 ~~penalties computed thereon, is exempt from any requirement that judgments be~~  
26 ~~renewed. A judgment for child, spousal, or family support, or a judgment for~~  
27 ~~reimbursement or other arrearages, and including all lawful interest and penalties~~  
28 ~~computed thereon, is enforceable until paid in full.~~

29 ~~(2) In the case of a money judgment whether payable in installments or not, for~~  
30 ~~the payment of child support, spousal support, or family support, or for~~  
31 ~~reimbursement or arrearages, and including all lawful interest computed thereon,~~  
32 ~~an application for renewal of the judgment may be filed:~~

33 ~~(A) If the judgment has not previously been renewed as to past due amounts, at~~  
34 ~~any time.~~

35 ~~(B) If the judgment has previously been renewed, the amount of the judgment as~~  
36 ~~previously renewed and any past due amount that became due and payable after~~  
37 ~~the previous renewal may be renewed at any time after five years has elapsed from~~  
38 ~~the time the judgment was previously renewed.~~

39 **Comment.** Subdivision (c) of Section 683.130 is deleted as unnecessary because it duplicates  
40 rules in the Family Code. See Fam. Code § 4502. This is not a substantive change. The exemption

1 from renewal requirements for support orders in subdivision (c)(1) is unnecessary because  
2 Section 683.310 makes clear that this chapter does not apply to judgments or orders made or  
3 entered under the Family Code. Reimbursement for child support under Welfare and Institutions  
4 Code Section 11350 is treated in the same fashion, as provided in Family Code Section 4502(a).  
5 The second sentence of subdivision (c)(1) is misplaced in this section pertaining to the time for  
6 filing an application for renewal. The period of enforceability of support orders is governed by  
7 Family Code Section 4502(a). The optional renewal procedure in Family Code Section 4502(b)  
8 continues the substance of subdivision (c)(2) of this section. See also Fam. Code § 290 (methods  
9 of enforcement).

10  **Note.** An alternative approach would be to leave subdivision (c)(2) in Section 683.130, but the  
11 logic of the suggested reorganization is to move special Family Code rules out of this chapter of  
12 the Enforcement of Judgments Law, consistent with its original structure which is reflected in  
13 Section 683.310. It is hoped this will eliminate one source of confusion. A complete severance of  
14 the Enforcement of Judgments Law and the Family Code is neither possible nor desirable. There  
15 are many special support enforcement provisions in the Enforcement of Judgments Law. See,  
16 e.g., Code Civ. Proc. §§ 695.211 (notice of interest on child support arrearages) [probably  
17 misplaced], 695.221 (crediting satisfaction of support payments), 697.320 (judgment lien based  
18 on installment support judgment), 697.360 (judgment lien under modified support judgment),  
19 706.030 (earnings withholding orders for support), 706.031 (earnings assignment orders for  
20 support).

21 **Code Civ. Proc. § 683.310 (amended). Time for filing renewal application**

22 SEC. 2. Section 683.310 of the Code of Civil Procedure is amended to read:

23 683.310. Except as otherwise provided in ~~Section 4502~~ of the Family Code, this  
24 chapter does not apply to a judgment or order made or entered pursuant to the  
25 Family Code.

26 **Comment.** Section 683.310 is amended to accommodate other exceptions in the Family Code  
27 and the possibility of future revisions in the Family Code. This is a technical, nonsubstantive  
28 change. Family Code Section 4502 provides an important exception, making the ministerial  
29 renewal scheme available as an option for support judgments. Moreover, Family Code Section  
30 291 makes this chapter applicable to enforceability and renewal of judgments for possession or  
31 sale entered under the Family Code.

32 **Code Civ. Proc. § 699.510 (amended). Issuance of writ of execution**

33 SEC. 3. Section 699.510 of the Code of Civil Procedure is amended to read:

34 699.510. (a) Subject to subdivision (b), after entry of a money judgment, a writ  
35 of execution shall be issued by the clerk of the court upon application of the  
36 judgment creditor and shall be directed to the levying officer in the county where  
37 the levy is to be made and to any registered process server. A separate writ shall be  
38 issued for each county where a levy is to be made. Writs may be issued  
39 successively until the money judgment is satisfied, except that a new writ may not  
40 be issued for a county until the expiration of 180 days after the issuance of a prior  
41 writ for that county unless the prior writ is first returned.

42 (b) If the judgment creditor seeks a writ of execution to enforce a judgment  
43 made, entered, or enforceable pursuant to the Family Code, in addition to the  
44 requirements of this article, the judgment creditor shall satisfy the requirements of  
45 any applicable provisions of ~~Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 5100) of Part 5~~

1 of Division 9 of the Family Code and Sections 290, 291, 2026, and 3556 of the  
2 Family Code.

3 **Comment.** The references to specific Family Code sections in subdivision (b) of Section  
4 699.510 are deleted as unnecessary. If the court has made an order under Family Code Section  
5 290 that affects the right to enforce support obligations by writ of execution, the order would have  
6 to be complied with. The reference to former Section 291 is obsolete; the new Section 291 does  
7 not apply to money judgments, and so is outside the scope of this section. References to Family  
8 Code Sections 2026 (reconciliation as amelioration of contempt) and 3556 (duty of support  
9 unaffected by failure or refusal of custody or visitation) are not relevant to issuance of a writ of  
10 execution under this section. The reference to Family Code Section 5100 *et seq.* is no longer  
11 relevant because the time limits on enforceability by writ have been removed from those sections.  
12 See Fam. Code §§ 5100-5101, as amended by 1993 Cal. Stat. ch. 876, §§ 21-22. The general  
13 reference to compliance with any additional rules in the Family Code is retained to draw attention  
14 to the possibility that special rules may exist or may be enacted in the future.

15 The references to Family Code Sections 2026 (reconciliation of parties to be considered as  
16 ameliorating factor in considering contempt of existing order) and 3556 ( duty of support not  
17 affected by failure or refusal of custodial parent to implement custody or visitation rights of  
18 noncustodial parent) are unrelated to the purpose of this section. Issuance of a writ of execution to  
19 enforce a money judgment does not have anything to do with enforcement by contempt. Use of  
20 the contempt power to enforce payment of support is distinct from enforcement by a writ of  
21 execution. Reference to Section 3556 seems irrelevant since that section provides that there is no  
22 excuse. The original intent of subdivision (b) was to pull in the court's authority to control  
23 enforcement by writ for amounts that were more than 10 years overdue, including the diligence  
24 rule in what became Family Code Section 291.

25 While the general authority of the court under Family Code Section 290 still exists, there are no  
26 limitations on writ issuance stated in the listed sections. Family Code Sections 5100 and 5101  
27 provide that a writ may be used without prior court approval as long as the judgment is  
28 enforceable (i.e., without time limitations).

29 **Fam. Code § 113 (added). Property**

30 SEC. 4. Section 113 is added to the Family Code, to read:

31 113. "Property" includes real and personal property and any interest therein.

32 **Comment.** Section 113 is a new provision added for drafting convenience. It is the same as  
33 Code of Civil Procedure Section 680.310. The context of a particular section may require that a  
34 word or phrase in that section be given a meaning different from the definition in this section. See  
35 Section 50. Special definitions used for a particular portion of this code would override the  
36 general definition in this section. *Id.*

37 **Fam. Code § 290 (amended). Methods and time of enforcement**

38 SEC. 5. Section 290 of the Family Code is amended to read:

39 290. A Subject to Section 291, a judgment or order made or entered pursuant to  
40 this code may be enforced by the court by execution, the appointment of a  
41 receiver, or contempt, or by such any other order as the court in its discretion  
42 determines from time to time to be necessary.

43 **Comment.** Section 290 is amended to apply the general rules concerning the period of  
44 enforceability and renewal of judgments in the Enforcement of Judgments Law to judgments for  
45 the possession or sale of property under the Family Code. Thus, for example, a judgment for sale  
46 would be unenforceable if it is not renewed within the 10-year period of Code of Civil Procedure  
47 Section 683.020. However, an action on the judgment may still be possible subject to the statute  
48 of limitations in Code of Civil Procedure Section 337.5. See Code Civ. Proc. § 683.020 &

1 Comment. This amendment does not affect the rules concerning enforcement of child, family, or  
2 spousal support. See, e.g., Sections 4502, 5100-5104.

3 **Fam. Code § 291 (repealed). Effect of lack of diligence in seeking enforcement**

4 SEC. 6. Section 291 of the Family Code is repealed.

5 ~~291. The lack of diligence for more than the period specified in Chapter 7~~  
6 ~~(commencing with Section 5100) of Part 5 of Division 9 in seeking enforcement of~~  
7 ~~a judgment or order made, entered, or enforceable pursuant to this code that~~  
8 ~~requires the payment of money shall be considered by the court in determining~~  
9 ~~whether to permit enforcement of the judgment or order under Section 290.~~

10 **Comment.** Section 291 is repealed because it is surplus. There is no longer any limitation on  
11 the period of enforceability of support. See Section 4502(a) (exception to general renewal  
12 requirement). The incorporated time limitations formerly in Section 5100 *et seq.* were removed in  
13 1993. See 1993 Cal. Stat. ch. 876, §§ 21-22. The repeal of this section is not intended to affect the  
14 court's authority to make appropriate orders in the exercise of its discretion under Section 290  
15 (methods of enforcement) nor to affect any other equitable powers the court may have. See, e.g.,  
16 *In re Marriage of Plescia*, 59 Cal. App. 4th 252, 259-62, 69 Cal. Rptr. 2d 120, 124-26 (1997)  
17 (doctrine of laches available, even though diligence under Section 291 no longer applicable to  
18 spousal support enforcement following elimination of 10-year rule in Section 5101).

19 **Fam. Code § 291 (added). Time of enforcement of judgment for possession or sale**

20 SEC. 7. Section 291 is added to the Family Code, to read:

21 291. A judgment or order for possession or sale of property made or entered  
22 pursuant to this code is subject to the period of enforceability and the procedure  
23 for renewal provided by Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 683.010) of  
24 Division 1 of Title 9 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

25 **Comment.** Section 291 applies the general rules concerning the period of enforceability and  
26 renewal of judgments in the Enforcement of Judgments Law to judgments for the possession or  
27 sale of property under the Family Code. This provision does not affect the rules concerning  
28 enforcement of child, family, or spousal support. See, e.g., Sections 4502 (period of support  
29 enforceability not limited; optional renewal of support judgments), 5100-5102 (enforcement of  
30 support by execution without prior court approval).

31 See also Section 113 ("property" includes real and personal property).

32 **Fam. Code § 4502 (amended). Enforceability of support, optional renewal**

33 SEC. 8. Section 4502 of the Family Code is amended to read:

34 4502. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a judgment for child,  
35 family, or spousal support, including a judgment for reimbursement that includes,  
36 but is not limited to, reimbursement arising under Section 11350 of the Welfare  
37 and Institutions Code or other arrearages, including all lawful interest and  
38 penalties computed thereon, is enforceable until paid in full and is exempt from  
39 any requirement that judgments be renewed. A judgment for child, family, or  
40 spousal support, including all lawful interest and penalties computed thereon, is  
41 enforceable until paid in full.

42 (b) Although not required, a judgment described in subdivision (a) optionally  
43 may be renewed pursuant to the procedure applicable to money judgments

1 generally under Article 2 (commencing with Section 683.110) of Chapter 3 of  
2 Division 1 of Title 9 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure. An application for  
3 renewal of a judgment described in subdivision (a), whether or not payable in  
4 installments, may be filed:

5 (1) If the judgment has not previously been renewed as to past due amounts, at  
6 any time.

7 (2) If the judgment has previously been renewed, the amount of the judgment as  
8 previously renewed and any past due amount that became due and payable after  
9 the previous renewal may be renewed at any time after a period of at least five  
10 years has elapsed from the time the judgment was previously renewed.

11 **Comment.** Subdivision (a) of Section 4502 is amended to add clarifying language concerning  
12 the scope of the enforceability rule from former subdivision (c)(1) of Code of Civil Procedure  
13 Section 683.130. The substance of the second sentence is combined with the first sentence for  
14 clarity and to avoid needing to repeat the scope of the rule.

15 Subdivision (b) is added to Section 4502 to continue the substance of the optional renewal  
16 procedure formerly in Code of Civil Procedure Section 683.130(c)(2). As the introductory clause  
17 of subdivision (b) makes clear, the ministerial renewal procedure is optional. The availability of  
18 renewal is intended to provide a simple and orderly manner for obtaining a currently accurate  
19 statement of the amount owing, taking into account past payments, unpaid accruals, and costs and  
20 interest added to the judgment. The option of renewing pursuant to the general procedure in the  
21 Code of Civil Procedure has no effect on the enforceability of the amount due, as is clear from  
22 subdivision (a). The limitation on the frequency of optional renewals in subdivision (b)(2) is  
23 consistent with the policy of Code of Civil Procedure Section 683.110(b) and is intended to limit  
24 the opportunity to compound interest on the principal amount owing. See Code Civ. Proc. §  
25 683.110(b) Comment.

26 See also Code Civ. Proc. § 683.310 (except as provided in Family Code, Code of Civil  
27 Procedure provisions on enforceability and renewal of judgments are inapplicable to judgment  
28 made or entered under Family Code); Fam. Code § 291 (enforceability and renewal of judgments  
29 for possession or sale).

30 **Fam. Code § 5100 (amended). Enforcement of child or family support without prior court**  
31 **approval**

32 SEC. 9. Section 5100 of the Family Code is amended to read:

33 5100. Notwithstanding Section ~~294~~ 290, a child or family support order may be  
34 enforced by a writ of execution or a notice of levy pursuant to Section 706.030 of  
35 the Code of Civil Procedure or Section 11350.7 of the Welfare and Institutions  
36 Code without prior court approval as long as the support order remains  
37 enforceable.

38 **Comment.** Section 5101 is amended to change the notwithstanding clause to refer to Section  
39 290 instead of Section 291. Section 290 provides the general rule concerning judicial discretion in  
40 enforcing judgments under the Family Code to which this section is an exception. Additionally,  
41 former Section 291 has been repealed and replaced by a new Section 291 that is not relevant to  
42 this section.

43 **Fam. Code § 5101 (amended). Enforcement of spousal support without prior court approval**

44 SEC. 10. Section 5101 of the Family Code is amended to read:

45 5101. Notwithstanding Section ~~294~~ 290, a spousal support order may be  
46 enforced by a writ of execution or a notice of levy pursuant to Section 706.030 of

1 the Code of Civil Procedure or Section 11350.7 of the Welfare and Institutions  
2 Code without prior court approval as long as the support order remains  
3 enforceable.

4 **Comment.** Section 5101 is amended to change the notwithstanding clause to refer to Section  
5 290 instead of Section 291. Section 290 provides the general rule concerning judicial discretion in  
6 enforcing judgments under the Family Code to which this section is an exception. Additionally,  
7 former Section 291 has been repealed and replaced by a new Section 291 that is not relevant to  
8 this section.

9 **Fam. Code § 5102 (repealed). Period for enforcement of installment payments**

10 SEC. 11. Section 5102 of the Family Code is repealed.

11 ~~5102. If a support order provides for the payment of support in installments, the~~  
12 ~~period specified pursuant to this chapter runs as to each installment from the date~~  
13 ~~the installment became due.~~

14 **Comment.** Section 5102 is repealed because it is surplus. There is no longer any limitation on  
15 the period of enforceability of support. See Section 4502(a).

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