

# Law to fortify child support

**United Press International**  
AUSTIN — Attorney General Jim Mattox said Wednesday his office will use a constitutional amendment that allows wage garnishment to enforce court-ordered child support payments as soon as the freshly-passed measure becomes law.

The garnishment proposal, along with nine other proposed constitutional amendments, was approved by an overwhelming margin in Tuesday's election. Only one amendment, a proposal to allow tax exemptions for certain fraternal and veterans organizations, was defeated.

"I consider refusal to pay

child support another form of child abuse," Mattox said. "It's just as serious an abuse as if someone goes in and physically abuses the child. If this won't make them pay, we'll seek contempt orders and throw them in jail until they do pay."

Mattox said his office would use the garnishment amendment primarily in cases where a single parent is receiving welfare payments because child support owed by an absent parent is unpaid.

Under state law, Mattox's office is responsible for collecting child support payments owed to persons who receive

payments from the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. He said his office would also aid some single parents who could not afford a lawyer to pursue a wage garnishment order.

"I think you are going to see child support payments increase dramatically," he said. "When it becomes socially unacceptable not to pay your child support, people will pay it. That's where we have got to get to."

Mattox also said the threat of garnishment will be enough to persuade many parents to pay up.

"I think just not wanting their

employer to know what situation they are in will cause a lot of people to pay," he said.

Only slightly more than 11 percent of Texas 6.5 million voters turned out for the off-year election, which featured no races for statewide office. A large percentage of the vote came from Houston, where a contested mayoral race generated voter interest.

Other propositions approved by voters included amendments that remove the governor from the pardons and parole process, set up a new veterans' mortgage assistance program, establish procedures for operating the

Legislature in case of nuclear attack and authorizing state money to be used as a guarantee for bonds issued by local school districts.

In addition, voters approved amendments that allow small counties to maintain fewer justices of the peace and constable precincts, change Texas' homestead exemption from \$10,000 to one acre of land, allow commodity groups to charge farmers a "refundable" fee for promoting their products and permit county probate judges to substitute for other judges in other counties.

## Around town

### Former student is visiting executive

Paul Ravesies, a Texas A&M former student and president of ARCO International, will speak Friday to students in the management class as part of the **Visiting Executive Series**. Ravesies will discuss the operations of the overseas division of the ARCO International oil and gas company.

The Visiting Executive Series is sponsored by the Center for Executive Development and the Management Department. The series brings business executives to the classroom to talk with seniors about the business world.

### Redpots speak tonight on traditions

The Traditions Council invites everyone to attend a presentation by the '83 Bonfire coordinators at 7:30 tonight in 601 Rudder. The redpots will discuss some lesser-known traditions involved in building and burning the bonfire. They also will present a slide show illustrating the construction of bonfire.

To submit an item for this column, come by The Battalion office in 216 Reed McDonald.

## Missing family's pickup located

**United Press International**  
AUSTIN — A blue pickup truck belonging to a Johnson family of three who disappeared a week ago was discovered Wednesday in a parking lot on Town Lake.

Authorities called in fingerprint experts to go over the truck, which a witness said had been parked in the lot since Monday.

Blanco County authorities have been baffled by the mysterious disappearance of Donald Cooper, 40, a motel clerk in Johnson City; his wife Penny, 44; and their daughter, Erin, 2. The family left Johnson City

apparently to go to Austin for a shopping trip on Nov. 1, but they have not been seen or heard from since.

Police said they left a roast simmering in a slow cooker and most of their possessions behind at their Johnson City apartment.

Charles Matus, who owns the Charles Motel where Cooper worked, said it wasn't like Cooper to go off without telling someone he was not coming back.

"If he moved on because he just wanted to move on, fine, he had a right to," Matus said. "But if he's hurt, if something has happened to him and his family, then I think we have to try and find out about it."

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