

# JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

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## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 847:** **CHILD SUPPORT - GUIDELINES**

**TO:** Hon. William C. Smith, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Tyree Grimes

**DATE:** March 5, 2020

Good Afternoon Chairman Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, my name is Tyrell Grimes and I'm here before you today to speak to the effects that current child support policy has on working-class citizens such as myself.

I'm 30 years old, born and raised in Prince George's County and am currently in the plumbing industry under my own company, "Uphill Plumbers" which I licensed three years ago.

I have two beautiful sons, the oldest of which is my eight-year-old who I currently have a child support order for. The reason I was placed on child support was in response to complications in my relationship with my son's mother. To be blunt, we separated when my son was two years old after I discovered that she had been consistently unfaithful - which is a pain that no one should have to experience. Before I even had time to process, I was served a child support order for my son and told to pay \$767 month. The magistrates refused to conduct a custody hearing and, as is usual in these circumstances for young men of color, the courts levied life-altering decisions in her favor without my input.

At the time, I was a plumber for R&R Mechanical and was subject often to what is known as a "Reduction in Force." This simply means that when the company has no work, we don't work. Needless to say, I still had to pay my bills; \$600 in rent, \$270 for my car and \$200 insurance, \$120 for phone, food, gas and of course my child support payment which I managed to negotiate down to \$500. During these influxes of income, I had to prioritize paying the bills required to sustain housing and transportation for work. In these tough times, I fell behind on child support payments and my driver's license was then suspended for unpaid arrears.

In my industry, transportation is vital. I drive directly to sites all over the state and with my license suspended for arrears, my livelihood was now in jeopardy. I had to take the daily risk of driving to work while suspended and received two driving on suspended violations.

To date, I have knocked my arrears down to just \$2300. I have experienced streams of wage garnishments making it extremely difficult to support myself and my plans to buy a house for my family have been

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derailed since my credit report has been damaged by the arrears. I continue to make my payments on time and wish that there was a way to reduce arrears for remaining in good standing.

Life on child support is extremely difficult for most working-class people. Even more painful is the fact that despite making payments, I haven't seen my son in nine months. This bill should make life a little easier for hard-working people like me and I urge a favorable report.