

HB946 // Child Support - Guidelines  
In the House - Hearing 2/20 at 1:00 p.m.

Dear Delegates,

I urge you to vote down **HB946 ( Child Support - Guidelines)**.

I urge a strong un-favorable for these bills.

Last year, both Judiciary Committees reviewed the issue of child support. A task force took 2 years to develop guidelines and revisions aligned with Pres. Obama's Executive Order to HHS. I had asked the JPR Chair to be involved in discussions. I offered input to staff. When the bills were presented, generous time was given to the bill proponents. I was given a few minutes to discuss 4 disparate bills which cover different issues.

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Committees/Media/false?cmte=iud&ys=2019RS&clip=JUD 3 7 2019 meeting 1&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmgahouse.maryland.gov%2Fmga%2Fplay%2Fd522a9c9-ac4c-456d-ae26-26de1df66b4d%2F%3Fcatalog%2F03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4c%26playfrom%3D8590000>

I offered follow-up, including an obligation structure & asked to assist with getting fathers involved in families and gaining reasonable, consistent obligor payments from noncustodial parents. And yet this bill is offered to you. It is a combination of 2 of last year's bills. This is all very sad attempts at helpful legislation. These bills will continue to harm Maryland families and children.

•• **Voluntary Impoverishment** ••

\* HB946 is a bill designed to help family lawyers and it will hurt families. The issue of proving voluntary impoverishment is troublesome for attorneys to prove so they wish to codify an obligation amount. This process relies on imputing income. Imputing income is SPECIFICALLY to be avoided per the Obama Executive Order.

Imputing income levels and voluntary impoverishment are concepts which are part of the failure of Maryland's family law courts. These concepts lead law-abiding but poor or currently poor fathers to jail. You just heard such testimony from Delegate Henson, a Child Support Enforcement lawyer (HB234 et al).

We do not live in a communist nation and work cannot be mandated on employees nor on employers.

Masters & judges have trouble with this -- not because they can't see when someone is evading child support nor when someone is living in poverty struggling to survive or survive + pay child support. Masters & judges have trouble because they are imputed by family law attorneys and litigants to have possession of a crystal ball with which they can forecast the future and -- therefore -- impute a reasonable income level when no data supports such imputing.

•• **Increased Burden on Courts** ••

\* HB946 INCREASES the child support obligations at a time of reduced earnings, changing family structure, proven failures of the Child Support System  
HB946 would:

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- Harmfully INCREASE pay by lower & middle class noncustodial parents [NCP's] while allowing upper middle to pay less and elite classes to negotiate in court (without burden of guidelines)
- Harmfully INCREASE pay by NCP's at a time of opioid addiction epidemic INCREASE pay when men's earning are dropping  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2012/07/31/wages-arent-stagnating-theyre-plummeting/?noredirect=on>
- Harmfully Mandate pay at near 20% rate some lower-income but allow the rich to pay-by percentage- a lower rate
- Harmfully INCREASE pay when less men are in the workforce yet women make up 60% of college graduates, who will not need support at the level of the 1970's when child support was created

Over-sized obligations lead to incarceration, father absence, child depression, family breakdown, criminal activity and other family-related pathologies. These guidelines must be reduced aligned with job force statistics for the fathers paying child support, the economy, the increasing amount of child support orders issued to non-citizens and outdated family presumptions (man as sole wage-earner).

<https://www.npr.org/2015/11/19/456632896/how-u-s-parents-racked-up-113-billion-in-child-support-debt>

Real-life conditions for fathers are in shambles since the inception of the child support system. Our fathers are in dire need (suicide, fathers leaving traditional roles, fathers dealing with part-time employment, etc.) due to the child support system.

**\*\* Issues Mandated in the Obama Executive Order to HHS \*\***

\* HB946 mentions self-support reserve, taken from the Obama E.O. and this can easily be done using Del Rosenberg's bill from 2016 as a template.

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2016RS/bills/hb/hb0731f.pdf>

Also, note that 110% of poverty is too low a threshold in the richest state in America. Having a home to bring their children to is vital and extremely important to keeping fathers involved with raising their children, being a part of their lives and (it will follow) making routine, steady obligations/payments for their children. The threshold in other states is as high as 137%."

I urge a strong un-favorable for these bills. I pray for the day when the Judiciary Committees slough off their ideologies and take input from those who view family holistically.

Thank you for your votes & your consideration.  
humbly  
~vince