

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony in Support of House Bill 161

Vehicle Laws - Driver's Licenses, Learner's Instructional Permits, and Identification Cards

TO: Hon. Marc Korman, Chair, and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 1, 2024

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports House Bill 161 with amendments, which would waive the fees associated with receiving a state ID under certain circumstances.**

House Bill 161 will waive the fee for receiving a state ID if the applicant:

- Presents documentation showing they were released from a correctional facility within the prior 60 days
- Presents documentation showing the applicant is a youth under the care of the Department of Juvenile Services
- Presents documentation showing that the applicant is a youth between 15 and 20 years of age who is a participant in a department of human services program
- Presents documentation showing that the applicant is currently homeless
- Or presents documentation showing that the applicant is currently under the care of the Maryland Department of Health

JOTF supports this legislation because having valid identification is critical for vulnerable populations to gain access to critical social services and employment opportunities. The demographics covered by the provisions of House Bill should not be subjected to the fees associated with applying for an ID; that is simply another financial barrier they are forced to overcome. Waiving the fee will increase access to the necessary documentation for vulnerable populations to improve their situations. However, many homeless individuals do not have access to documentation proving that they are homeless. JOTF would support amendments that allows for alternative methods for an individual to prove their unhoused status besides documentation to ensure this bill directly supports the populations that need it the most.

For these reasons, JOTF supports House Bill 161 and urges a favorable report with amendments.

For more information, contact:

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