



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 174/ HOUSE BILL 311:

Child Support - Suspension of Driver's Licenses

TO: Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Christopher Dews, Policy Consultant

Crossover Testimony

The Center for Urban Families (CFUF) fully supports Senate Bill 174 including the sponsor amendments that will restore the current notification process into the bill so that DHS can contact the obligor multiple times before the issue goes to court which we understand will significantly reduce the fiscal note.

Original Testimony

The Center for Urban Families (CFUF) advocates for legislative initiatives to strengthen urban communities by helping fathers and families achieve stability and economic success. CFUF supports Senate Bill 174/ House Bill 311 to ensure that driver's license suspensions for inability to pay child support are used in appropriate cases.

Mobility is key in Maryland's regional economy. The Census Bureau reported that almost [40% of Marylanders travel outside their county for employment](#). This statistic is more pronounced for lower-income communities of color where there is a scarcity of jobs available by public transit. [Only 8.5% of jobs in the Baltimore region can be reached within one hour, one way by public transit](#). Thus, a valid driver's license and a vehicle are necessary for economic sustainability.

[Federal Code 42 U.S.C.A. § 666 \(a\)](#) demands that all States have laws that "increase the effectiveness of the [child support enforcement] program which the state administers" and allows the State to withhold, suspend, or restrict licenses of individuals owing child support in "[appropriate cases](#)" (16). To this end, [Maryland Code Ann., Fam. Law § 10-119](#) states that upon 60 days of nonpayment of child support, an obligor shall have their license or privilege to drive suspended, regardless of their circumstances or ability to pay. The suspension mechanism is automated through the Child Support Enforcement Agency, and **no** determination is made as to whether or not a suspension would be appropriate. Maryland Legal Aid and the University of Baltimore have reported individuals who are disabled, *not* in arrears, or with primary custody of their children, having their licenses suspended.



Additionally, [a report cited](#) by the Abell Foundation found that **42% of individuals who had their licenses suspended lost jobs as a result of the suspension, 45% of those who lost jobs could not find another job, and 88% of those who were able to find another job reported a decrease in income.**

Senate Bill 174/ House Bill 311 seeks to resolve this by ensuring that before the Child Support Enforcement Administration notifies the MVA of an obligor in arrears, a circuit court hearing needs to be established to determine if the suspension is appropriate. It proceeds to determine that a suspension is not appropriate for the obligor if:

1. The minor lives mainly with the obligor;
2. The obligor is disabled and unable to work;
3. The suspension would risk the loss of employment or job opportunities;
4. The obligor could not pay or is making arrangements to pay;
5. The obligor is currently paying the full child support amount;
6. If the suspension would place an undue hardship on the family;
7. The reported arrearage amount is not accurate; or
8. The Administration has agreed with the obligor through the payment incentive program.

The Center for Urban Families believes this is a rational approach to ensuring that the state is not needlessly endangering the well-being of families by limiting the obligor's access to employment and quality time with their child. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

The Undersigned Organizations Support House Bill 311/ Senate Bill 174

1. Center for Urban Families
2. Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF)
3. BetterU Construction Training
4. Maryland Legal Aid
5. University of Baltimore School of Law
6. Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service
7. Showing Up for Racial Justice
8. Out for Justice
9. Office of the Public Defender
10. Life After Release
11. CASH Campaign of Maryland
12. America Works
13. Court Watch PG
14. Consumer Auto
15. HTP Homes
16. Helping Oppressed People Excel
17. Helping Ourselves Transform
18. Public Justice Center
19. Civic Works Center for Sustainable Careers
20. 1199 SEIU
21. Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition
22. PIVOT Program
23. Economic Action Maryland
24. Northeast Catholic Community
25. Baltimore Mutual Aid for Mental Health

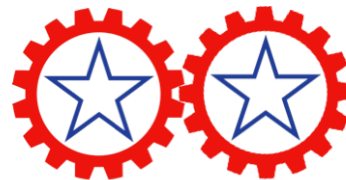


25 YEARS OF SEEDING
LEGACIES FOR THE FUTURE

26. Marylanders Against Poverty

27. Cornerstone Full Gospel Church

28. Fines and Fees Justice Center



AMERICA WORKS
Network of Companies





25 YEARS OF SEEDING
LEGACIES FOR THE FUTURE



**ECONOMIC
ACTION MD**



PIVOT

MVLS
MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE



MARYLAND
LEGAL AID

ub SCHOOL
OF LAW



Cornerstone
FULL GOSPEL CHURCH