

# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Beach, Jacqueline

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 41. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

The primary purpose of Section 10-203 is to enforce child support payments. However, compounding punishments does not equate to an increased likelihood of payment from a parent. In fact, tacking on additional sentences, leading to longer imprisonment, not only narrows a parent’s ability to find employment upon release, but punishes the child as they are further ostracized from a parent and are the direct subject to the accumulating unpaid debt the parent is battling as incarceration detracts their earning power. Additionally, accumulating sentences due to nonpayment inadvertently targets communities with lower socioeconomic powers and thus results in more people incarcerated without being provided the tools to pay off the debt their conviction was based on. According to The Abell Foundation’s 2019 report, “the main reason for nonpayment is the inability to pay the order amount. Contrary to the stereotype of the “deadbeat parent,” almost all noncustodial parents who fail to pay child support are poor. They have unstable employment and low earnings, and a significant number have a history of incarceration. One-quarter of all noncustodial parents with a child support case in the Maryland child support caseload receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, one indicator of low income and food insecurity.” Enacting punishment without the goal of repairing the causes of the punished behavior doesn’t make us a better society, but rather reveals a system of neglect and intentional harm to individuals who need government assistance the most.

Child support, by definition, is intended for a child’s wellbeing and development. However, by allowing our punitive system to compound longer, harsher sentences instead of allowing sentences to be run concurrently, we punish the child as we further incapacitate their struggling parent. In only 10 zip codes within Baltimore, parents within the child support system owe a collective \$233 million, the majority of this money is predominantly uncollectible. It is important to note that this does not mean the parent of the custodial child is not receiving payment, but rather the payments are covered by the government. Harsher punishments do not reward the child, and longer sentences will not ensure this money is repaid. Without SB0394, we create a vicious cycle of compounding incarceration against those who are drowning under the rising swell of financial insecurity. The goal of child support enforcement should be ensuring successful parenting, not a justification for punitive gluttony.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,  
Jacqueline Beach  
2366 Sundew Terrace  
Baltimore, MD 21209  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

**Testimony\_JPC\_SB0394.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carter, Jill

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter  
In Favor of SB0394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support -  
Sentencing  
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
on February 9, 2021**

**Mr. Chairman, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:**

**Senate Bill 394 closes a loophole in our child support enforcement law by providing that a noncustodial parent's sentence for willful non-payment of child support must run concurrent with other sentences under the same provision. Under current law, a parent may serve multiple, consecutive sentences under the same provision.**

**The harm in these cases is simple to understand. Those convicted under current law have the potential of being incarcerated for upwards of 10 or more years, taking away from the child valuable time and experiences with their parent. Not only is excessive incarceration in these cases detrimental to the emotional development of the child, it is unproductive in recovering owed child support, and unnecessarily expensive, costing the state more than \$13,000 per year to keep these parents incarcerated.**

**With this bill, much of this harm can be alleviated, and family ties strengthened, throughout our state. In addition, Maryland can join other states, like our neighboring Virginia, in adopting concurrent sentencing for child support cases.**

**Given that this bill will strengthen family ties, promote the welfare of our state's children, and positively affect state or local incarceration costs, this bill makes common sense.**

**As such, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on Senate Bill 394.**

**Respectfully,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

**Jill P. Carter**

# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Hauck, Barbara

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 43. I am also a longtime member of Baltimore's vibrant theatre community, and the Artistic Director at the Fells Point Corner Theatre. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**, which will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.



"They're struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you're going to make them drown." This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment does not allow for leniency, rather it "stacks" corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

The primary purpose of Section 10-203 is to enforce child support payments but compounding punishments does not equate to an increased likelihood of payment from a parent. In fact, tacking on additional sentences leading to longer imprisonment, not only narrows a parent's ability to find employment upon release, but punishes the child as they are further ostracized from a parent and are the direct subject to the accumulating unpaid debt the parent is battling as incarceration detracts their earning power. Additionally, accumulating sentences due to nonpayment inadvertently targets communities with lower socioeconomic power and thus results in more people incarcerated without being provided the tools to pay off the debt. According to The Abell Foundation's 2019 report, "the main reason for nonpayment is the inability to pay the order amount. Contrary to the stereotype of the "deadbeat parent," almost all noncustodial parents who fail to pay child support are poor. They have unstable employment and low earnings, and a significant number have a history of incarceration. One-quarter of all noncustodial parents with a child support case in the Maryland child support caseload receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, one indicator of low income and food insecurity." Enacting punishment without repairing the causes of the punished behavior doesn't make us a better society. It reveals a system of neglect and intentional harm to individuals who need government assistance the most.

Child support, by definition, is intended for a child's wellbeing and development. By allowing our punitive system to compound longer, harsher sentences instead of allowing sentences to be run concurrently, we punish the child as we further incapacitate their struggling parent. In only 10 zip codes in Baltimore, parents within the child support system owe a collective \$233 million, the majority of which is predominantly uncollectible. It is important to note this does not mean the parent of the custodial child is not receiving payment, rather the payments are covered by the government. Harsher punishments do not reward the child, and longer sentences will not ensure this money is repaid. Without SB0394, we create a vicious cycle of compounding incarceration against those who are drowning under the rising swell of financial insecurity. The goal of child support enforcement should be ensuring successful parenting, not a justification for punitive gluttony.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Hauck (she/her)  
3420 Harford Road  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **SURJ Child Support 2021 2 5.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kleinman, Jan

Position: FAV



Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 43. As a parent, I want to do everything in my power to support my child. What if circumstances prevent me from helping him? I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,

*Jan Kleinman*

*2700 Remington Avenue Apt 504*

*Baltimore, MD 21211*

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

**SB394 Center for Hope child support FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lombardi, Joyce

Position: FAV

A LIFE BRIDGE HEALTH GROUP

# CENTER FOR HOPE

Advancing hope, healing and resilience



SB394- Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support - Sentencing

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee – February 9, 2021

Testimony of Joyce Lombardi, Director of Government Relations and Legal Services, Center for Hope

Position: **SUPPORT**

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I write in support of SB394. The Center for Hope, a subsidiary of Life Bridge, is a comprehensive violence program that addresses violence through the lifespan, and includes child advocacy, domestic violence programs, street violence interruption programs and an elder abuse program

This bill would require that sentences for nonpayment of child support run concurrently, not consecutively. It still penalizes some parents for criminal failure to pay child support, but it removes the undue burden caused by consecutive sentences. Overly burdensome child support obligations are one of the impediments blocking some of our street violence clients from joining the local economy. Incarcerating parents for consecutive terms arguably does not support the very families and children that child support penalties are designed to help.

The Center for Hope includes several community violence programs, including a hospital-based violence intervention program, which uses skilled hospital responders to engage patients treated for street violence-related injuries, such as gunshot wounds and stabbings, and offers follow-up workforce development opportunities, support and referrals after discharge. The hospital response program adheres to the evidence-based, nationally known, Cure Violence model, which requires collaborating with Baltimore Safe Streets and other service programs and providing social services for violence victims and their families.

Since inception, Sinai's hospital responders have assisted over 360 shooting/stabbing/street violence patients whose injuries were serious enough to be admitted to the hospital. These patients are predominantly male (90 percent) aged 18-82, with the vast majority between 25-40. Of 114 patients that the hospital response program assisted between June 2018 and July 2019, over 92% AVOIDED violent activity that came to the attention of law enforcement within 6 months of being discharged and 98% avoided being re-admitted to Sinai for an additional violence-related injury. Our programs work.

Last session, our Community Violence program manager testified in Annapolis about a young father who graduated from the program and found work in the local economy. But past child support debt accrued during his incarceration proved unmanageable and he re-joined the underground economy to help pay staggering costs. Within a year, he became another victim of the gunshot violence that traumatizes Baltimore. Over-punishment of child support obligations help no one, families included.

For all of the heretofore stated reasons, we request a **FAVORABLE** report for SB394.

Joyce Lombardi, Esq., Director of Government Relations and Legal Services (443) 923-7005

**SB 394 Testimony .pdf**

Uploaded by: Novak, Natalie

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 41. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

The primary purpose of Section 10-203 is to enforce child support payments. However, compounding punishments does not equate to an increased likelihood of payment from a parent. In fact, tacking on additional sentences, leading to longer imprisonment, not only narrows a parent’s ability to find employment upon release, but punishes the child as they are further ostracized from a parent and are the direct subject to the accumulating unpaid debt the parent is battling as incarceration detracts their earning power. Additionally, accumulating sentences due to nonpayment inadvertently targets communities with lower socioeconomic powers and thus results in more people incarcerated without being provided the tools to pay off the debt their conviction was based on. According to The Abell Foundation’s 2019 report, “the main reason for nonpayment is the inability to pay the order amount. Contrary to the stereotype of the “deadbeat parent,” almost all noncustodial parents who fail to pay child support are poor. They have unstable employment and low earnings, and a significant number have a history of incarceration. One-quarter of all noncustodial parents with a child support case in the Maryland child support caseload receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, one indicator of low income and food insecurity.” Enacting punishment without the goal of repairing the causes of the punished behavior doesn’t make us a better society, but rather reveals a system of neglect and intentional harm to individuals who need government assistance the most.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,

**Natalie Novak**  
**1206 W Northern Parkway, Baltimore 21209**

# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Rehr, Nathan

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District **45**. I am an active member of my community association and a health professional who is interested in eliminating the health disparities that occur with racial discrimination in our society. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,

**Nathan Rehr**

**450 E. Federal Street Baltimore, MD 21202**

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Rosenthal, Anne

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 40. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,

**Anne Rosenthal**

**810 Cathedral St, Baltimore MD 21201**

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Shillenn, Rebecca

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 43, in Hamilton Hills. I am also a stepmother who believes that while child support is important for the care of children, punishing parents by compounding jail time for nonpayment does not help the children in question. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

"They're struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you're going to make them drown". This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for "stacking" corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Shillenn

5401 Elsrode Avenue, Baltimore MD 21214

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# Untitled document (2).pdf

Uploaded by: Shock, Jack

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

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drowning under the rising swell of financial insecurity. The goal of child support enforcement should be ensuring successful parenting, not a justification for punitive gluttony.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,  
Jack Shock  
4444 La Plata Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore



# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Simmons, Christina

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 42B. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. **A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt.** The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

The primary purpose of Section 10-203 is to enforce child support payments. However, **compounding punishments does not equate to an increased likelihood of payment from a parent.** In fact, tacking on additional sentences, leading to longer imprisonment, not only narrows a parent’s ability to find employment upon release, but **punishes the child as they are further ostracized from a parent** and are the direct subject to the accumulating unpaid debt the parent is battling as incarceration detracts their earning power. Additionally, accumulating sentences due to nonpayment inadvertently targets communities with lower socioeconomic powers and thus results in more people incarcerated without being provided the tools to pay off the debt their conviction was based on. According to The Abell Foundation’s 2019 report, “the main reason for nonpayment is the inability to pay the order amount. Contrary to the stereotype of the “deadbeat parent,” almost all noncustodial parents who fail to pay child support are poor. They have unstable employment and low earnings, and a significant number have a history of incarceration. One-quarter of all noncustodial parents with a child support case in the Maryland child support caseload receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, one indicator of low income and food insecurity.” Enacting punishment without the goal of repairing the causes of the punished behavior doesn’t make us a better society, but rather reveals a system of neglect and intentional harm to individuals who need government assistance the most.

**Child support, by definition, is intended for a child’s wellbeing and development.** However, by allowing our punitive system to compound longer, harsher sentences instead of allowing sentences to be run concurrently, we punish the child as we further incapacitate their struggling parent. In only 10 zip codes within Baltimore, parents within the child support system owe a collective \$233 million, the majority of this money is predominantly uncollectible. It is important to note that this does not mean the parent of the custodial child is not receiving payment, but rather the payments are covered by the government. Harsher punishments do not reward the child, and longer sentences will not ensure this money is repaid. Without SB0394, we create a vicious cycle of compounding incarceration against those who are drowning under the rising swell of financial insecurity. The goal of child support enforcement should be ensuring successful parenting, not a justification for punitive gluttony.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,

Christina Simmons

304 Stevenson Ln Apt B8 Towson, MD 21204

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Smeton, Jonathan

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 43. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Smeton

3140 Ellerslie Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21218

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Wilkins, Katherine

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District **12**. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents. A system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,

**Katherine Wilkins**

**10651 Gramercy Pl, Unit 257, Columbia, MD 21044**

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **SB 394 - Family Law - Nonpayment of Child Support**

Uploaded by: Yoder, Daryl

Position: FAV

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of white folks working as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs. I am a resident of MD District 12. I am testifying in support of **Senate Bill 394**.



**Senate Bill 394** will require sentences to a non-custodial parent for failure to pay child support to run concurrently with sentences for other charges.

“They’re struggling [...] to keep themselves from drowning [but] you’re going to make them drown”. This is how Printess Doughty, a Maryland resident, responded when asked by the Baltimore Sun to explain the strains the current child support system places on African American communities and parents, a system whose current punitive structures readily plunges struggling parents into the depths of cyclical debt. The current statutes enforcing child support payment allow not for leniency, but for “stacking” corrective sentences against a parent. Without designated sentencing guidelines, as outlined in Senate Bill 394, a court has the ability to lengthen a sentence by tacking on separate convictions, despite each conviction being rooted in the same set of facts, the same circumstances, and, without any hesitation, a conviction that is normally a three-year sentence is now a seven-year imprisonment.

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Senate Bill 394**.

Sincerely,  
Daryl Yoder

309 Glenmore Ave.

Catonsville, MD 21228



Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

# **MD Judiciary - Testimony SB 394.pdf**

Uploaded by: Elalamy, Sara

Position: UNF

**MARYLAND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE**  
**GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Hon. Mary Ellen Barbera  
Chief Judge

187 Harry S. Truman Parkway  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**FROM:** Legislative Committee  
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.  
410-260-1523  
**RE:** Senate Bill 394  
Family Law – Nonpayment of Child Support - Sentencing  
**DATE:** January 15, 2021  
(2/9)  
**POSITION:** Oppose

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The Maryland Judiciary opposes Senate Bill 394. This bill requires a sentence for a conviction under a provision of law prohibiting a parent from willfully failing to provide for the support of his or her minor child to run concurrently with a sentence for any other conviction under the same provision of law imposed against the parent.

Although the Judiciary understands this is an effort to consolidate sentences for convictions for failure to pay child support, there are situations in which courts may want sentences to run consecutively. If enacted, this bill would limit judges' discretion to do so. The Judiciary believes that it is important for judges to weigh the facts and circumstances for each case, including possible mitigating factors, when imposing a sentence.

cc. Hon. Jill Carter  
Judicial Council  
Legislative Committee  
Kelley O'Connor