

SHANEKA HENSON
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Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Chair: Delegate Luke Clippinger
Vice Chair: Delegate David Moon
6 Bladen Street Room 101
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Moon, House Judiciary Committee, thank you for considering HB262 entitled “Family Law – Nonpayment of Child Support – Sentencing.” This bill will serve to help families and children all across our state.

Early in my time as a family law attorney, I overheard another attorney bragging about getting a person sentenced to 12 years for failure to pay child support. I was, of course, shocked by the brazenness of this individual, but also concerned about how this loophole in our code was allowing for such extreme sentencing to take place. Sentences like this disregard the original intent of the law.

HB262 intends to close the loophole in Family Law, Section 10 - 203 which currently does not exclude the possibility of a noncustodial parent in a failure to pay child support case from serving multiple consecutive sentences, potentially incurring incarceration for the entire time their children remain a minor, as was the situation in the courtroom that day.

And to what end? Excessive incarceration in child support enforcement cases is unnecessarily costly to the state and both parents involved in the proceedings. It is most certainly unproductive in procuring owed child support payments, and most importantly it is detrimental to the emotional support of children who will be better served by the involvement and presence of both

their parents. It is my intention with this bill to prevent excessive incarceration for the betterment of state and family values.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shaneka Henson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Delegate Shaneka Henson