

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 164/ HOUSE BILL 326**

**Driver's Licenses - Suspension for Child Support Arrearages - Exception**

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

FROM: Marquis Williams

DATE: February 2nd, 2023

**My name is Marquis Williams** and I support(s) SENATE BILL 164/ HOUSE BILL 326 to repeal the punitive practice of driver's license suspensions for lower-income obligors.

To be blunt, I believe that the current child support structure is unethical, unfair, and unconstitutional. No one should have the power to restrict access to employment, restrict passports, and force you into poverty or the underground economy to provide for themselves. Since my license was suspended for a somewhat conflicting child support order, I have had to fight to maintain employment and take care of my family.

I am an entrepreneur in the customer service field, performing systems management services for companies like Peloton and others. I am currently studying welding and recently finished a preconstruction program for the carpentry, plumbing, and electrical fields. I live in District 40 in Baltimore City, where most jobs are only accessible by vehicular transit. I need full access to my license to survive in this city and, ironically, make payments on my child support case. I have missed out on many financial opportunities due to my license being suspended for children I currently have joint custody of, which I contested, leading me to lose my driver's license and some of the best jobs I've had.

One of the primary reasons for joining the BetterU construction training program was to have my license suspension lifted since they have a solid connection with Child Support. I am not exaggerating when I say that they have ruined life. When I contested the child support order due to the joint custody case, my wife discovered that her wages were consistently being garnished needlessly. This caused a deep friction between which led to our separation. Keep in mind that the mother of my child is receiving multiple child support payments from different men, does not work, is on government assistance and repeatedly brags on social media about her recent overseas vacation.

That the current child support system ruins marriages, blocks employment, and harms children is seriously problematic. When working multiple jobs, I was taxed twice on both jobs, and the amount taken out of my account was so egregious that for my survival, I had to drop out of the traditional workforce entirely. It bothers me that there is no factoring of bills, cost of living, or relationship to the child, and this needs to change.

Child Support shouldn't cause individuals like myself who have joint custody or pay for their child to be driven into poverty and desperation. SENATE BILL 164/ HOUSE BILL 326 ends the practice of suspending licenses for child support arrears of those making less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or \$41k annually. It's a big move in the right direction. For these reasons and more, I urge a favorable report on SENATE BILL 164/ HOUSE BILL 326.