



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

Child Support - Suspension of Driver's Licenses

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

FROM: Antoin Quarles, Executive Director

H.O.P.E. empowers men and women to make the transition from incarceration to community successfully and permanently. We help connect returning citizens with practical matters to remove barriers of reentry, such as resources for job and GED training; managing case-worker and other appointments; and developing new coping skills, accountability, life laws, and strong relationships to help deal with the stresses of life outside jail or prison, as well as deeper hurt and trauma. support(s) 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.

[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. Many people are disabled, *not* in arrears, or with primary custody of their children, having their licenses suspended.

Senate Bill 174/ House Bill 311 will 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 is not wise to remove transportation access for people who may or may not owe money as it prevents them from paying. 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.