



*Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes*

### **Testimony for Senate Bill 703**

#### **Family Investment Program and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits - Child Support**

TO: Hon. William C. Smith, Jr, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 19, 2024

POSITION: Support

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports Senate Bill 703.**

This bill is at its core an anti-child poverty bill that aligns with Governor Wes Moore's commitment to ending child poverty in MD, as expressed through the passage and priorities expressed via the ENOUGH ACT last session. It ensures that all child support in Maryland goes directly to the child and custodial parent instead of being kept by the State for cost recovery.

According to the most recent review of Maryland's child support system, 62% of custodial parents either currently or previously received temporary cash assistance, or TCA. As a result, a high percentage of Marylanders are having child support payments for their children are being intercepted to various degrees.

TCA and other benefits alone do not provide enough income to pull a family out of poverty. Low-income families should also receive the entirety of child support payments, which has been proven to be an important anti-poverty program. Passing through all child support in other states has been shown to increase family income and improve financial stability, reduce the need for CPS involvement, increase non-custodial parental involvement, and increase non-custodial parents' frequency and amount of child support payments.

This administration and the Maryland General Assembly have signaled their commitment to the eradication of child poverty and uplifting low income families. Allowing child support to pass through to reach the families in need of it is a common sense step in achieving that goal.

**For these reasons, JOTF supports Senate Bill 703 and urges a favorable report.**

**For more information, contact:**

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