



OUT FOR JUSTICE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF [SENATE BILL 106](#) / [HOUSE BILL 110](#):

Child Support - Suspension of Driver's Licenses

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

FROM: **Dwan Burton**, Deputy Director of Out for Justice

As Deputy Director of Out for Justice, an organization dedicated to advocating for individuals impacted by the legal system. I am writing to express our strong support for **Senate Bill 106 (SB106) and House Bill 110 (HB 110)**, which seeks to reform the process by which the Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA) can request the suspension of an individual's driver's license due to child support arrearages.

Under existing Maryland law, the CSEA is authorized to notify the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to suspend an obligor's driver's license if they are 60 days or more out of compliance with their child support payments.

This policy, while intended to enforce child support obligations, often has the unintended consequence of further destabilizing the financial situation of low-income individuals. For many, especially those with a criminal record, a valid driver's license is essential for securing and maintaining employment. The suspension of this license can thus create a vicious cycle: without the ability to drive, individuals may lose their jobs or be unable to find work, making it even more challenging to meet child support obligations.

Proposed Reforms in SB 106:

SB 106 introduces several critical reforms to address these issues:

1. **Extended Compliance Period:** The bill proposes extending the compliance period from 60 days to 120 days, providing obligors with additional time to fulfill their child support responsibilities before facing license suspension.
2. **Enhanced Notification and Due Process:** Before notifying the MVA, the CSEA must make reasonable attempts to notify the obligor of their noncompliance status, including both written and electronic notices. If the obligor fails to respond or resolve the arrearage, **the CSEA is required to petition the court for a**



determination on whether license suspension is appropriate. This process ensures that **obligors have the opportunity to present their circumstances before any punitive action is taken.**

3. **Consideration of Individual Circumstances:** The court is tasked with evaluating whether the obligor demonstrates that suspension would impede current or potential employment, or that they lack the ability to pay despite reasonable efforts. *(Enacting this would counter the narrative that CSEA frequently touts that an obligor has the means to pay the arrearage but is willfully withholding payment or is voluntarily impoverished, and as such allows the courts to decide the most appropriate action.)*

At Out for Justice, we advocate closely with justice-impacted individuals. Many of our members face significant barriers to employment due to their criminal records. A valid driver's license is often a critical tool for overcoming these barriers, enabling individuals to access job opportunities, attend interviews, and commute to work.

By implementing the reforms proposed in SB 106, Maryland can adopt a more equitable approach to child support enforcement. These changes recognize the complex realities faced by low-income obligors and aim to prevent punitive measures that may inadvertently exacerbate their financial hardships. By ensuring that license suspensions are considered carefully and applied judiciously, the state can better support both the financial stability of obligors and the well-being of their children.

Out for Justice strongly urges the Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 106. This bill represents a balanced and compassionate approach to child support enforcement, one that upholds the importance of parental responsibility while acknowledging and addressing the systemic barriers that many individuals face.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this critical issue.