

# JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

*Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes*

## Testimony for Senate Bill 106

### Child Support – Suspension of Driver’s Licenses

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

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: January 22, 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 106.**

Many jobs for those living in Baltimore city are in surrounding counties and consequently to get to these jobs, a car and a driver's license is required. If a person does not have a car or a driver’s license they cannot get to their job, and without their job they have no income, and without their income they cannot pay their child support. Thus taking a low income person's driver license away is harmful to the obligor, the custodial parent and the child. More than 20,000 obligors had their driver’s license suspended in FY 23, harming them and their families pursuant to existing law. It also harmed their employers, the state’s economy, and the state’s tax base. It is counterproductive.

A Report from the Abell Foundation ([see here](#)) discusses in detail how suspending the driver's license of a low income individual hurts the obligor, the child and the family.

Senate Bill 106 changes the procedure for the Child Support Administration to suspend an individual’s license for child support arrears. Currently, the Administration can suspend the license for an individual with arrearages, and the burden falls on the individual to contact the administration to request an investigation to appeal the decision. SB 106 would allow the Administration to suspend an individual’s license only after the administration provides clear and convincing evidence in court that the obligor has the funds to pay and is consciously withholding payment or is voluntarily impoverished.

JOTF contends that the current system does not adequately differentiate between non-custodial parents who are purposefully withholding child support and ones who are simply poor. Placing the burden of proof on the administration in identifying who is purposefully withholding payment by a fair standard will ensure that poverty is not being unfairly criminalized.

**For these reasons, JOTF supports Senate Bill 106 and urges a favorable report.**

**For more information, contact:**

Kam Bridges /Public Policy Advocate / Kam@jotf.org