

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 is another approach to address the punitive and counterproductive current law and practice. It provides due process and a hearing before a court prior to suspending an obligor's driver's license. It places the burden of proof by clear and convincing evidence on the Department. If the obligor establishes any one of several grounds by preponderance of the evidence, the court may not suspend the obligor's driver's license. One of those grounds is that it would harm the obligor's current or potential employment. As SB 106 does not have an income limitation, it may affect even more obligors. Consequently, JOTF thinks that SB 106 and SB 15 are complementary approaches to a successful child support policy that keeps obligors driving so they can continue working and paying their child support.

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

For more information, contact:

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