



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Sponsor Testimony

SB 106: Child Support – Suspension of Driver's Licenses

Good afternoon, Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman, and distinguished members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Senate Bill 106 addresses the suspension of driver's licenses due to child support arrearages. This bill seeks to amend current law relating to the authority of the Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA) to notify the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to suspend an individual's driver's license or privilege to drive for failing to meet child support obligations.

Under existing law in Maryland, the CSEA has the authority to notify the MVA to suspend an individual's driver's license if they are 60 days or more out of compliance with child support payments. While this provision is intended to encourage payment and enforce child support obligations, it has often had a detrimental impact on low-income individuals, many of whom rely on their ability to drive to secure and maintain employment.

The unintended consequence of this policy is that, for many individuals, the suspension of their driver's license can lead to a vicious cycle. Without the ability to drive, they may lose their jobs or be unable to find employment, making it even more difficult to meet their child support obligations. This exacerbates the financial instability of individuals who are already struggling, particularly those with a criminal record, who may face additional barriers to employment.

Existing Law in Maryland: Under the current law, if an individual fails to pay child support and their arrearages exceed 60 days, the CSEA has the authority to notify the MVA to suspend their driver's license. This law was put in place with the goal of compelling compliance with child support payments by leveraging the loss of a driver's license, which is essential for many to maintain steady employment and daily life.

Senate Bill 106 proposes to alter these provisions to create a more balanced and effective approach to enforcement. The bill allows for more targeted use of the suspension of driving privileges by considering factors such as the individual's ability to

pay and their employment situation. This will help prevent the loss of employment and further financial hardship for those who are already struggling to meet their child support obligations.

By limiting the automatic suspension of driver's licenses in certain circumstances, SB 106 ensures that individuals are not unfairly penalized in a way that further impedes their ability to meet their obligations. This will lead to better compliance with child support orders, while also reducing the potential for individuals to fall into a cycle of unemployment and financial instability.

In closing, SB 106 is a common-sense approach to addressing child support arrearages while recognizing the real-life challenges faced by low-income individuals. By altering the provisions surrounding the suspension of driver's licenses, this bill strikes a better balance between ensuring that child support obligations are met and providing individuals with the tools they need to succeed financially.

Therefore, I respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report for SB 106, as it will ultimately benefit both families and individuals who are trying to meet their responsibilities while working toward greater financial stability.