



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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January 22, 2025

Chairman William C. Smith, Jr.
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers strong favorable support for Senate Bill 15 (SB0015) – Child Support – Driver’s License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders. This bill introduces critical updates to the process for suspending driver’s licenses due to child support arrearages and establishes fairer requirements for enforcement while protecting the rights of low-income individuals. **This bill is on the 2025 legislative priority agenda of the Black Caucus.**

Comparative studies conducted by researchers at Brown University and the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia found that 91% of license suspensions are for non-driving-related events. Coupled with the majority of non-driving-related suspensions being most common in low-income communities with a high-proportion of black and minority residents, drivers license suspensions without consideration towards systemic barriers often exacerbates existing systemic challenges such as underemployment and barriers to stable work.

Additionally, current penalties for overdue child support payments do not require the Child Support Administration (CSA) to notify the non-custodial parent before initiating license suspensions which further undermines the economic stability of Black families, compounding cycles of poverty and financial insecurity.

To address these inequities, Senate Bill 15 first mandates that the CSA notify individuals before initiating license suspensions, including written notices with information on how to appeal or request investigations, safeguarding individuals from being unfairly penalized due to administrative errors or circumstances beyond their control.

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Furthermore, Senate Bill 15 includes provisions for work-restricted licenses, increases the threshold for license suspension from 60 to 120 days of noncompliance, and exemptions for individuals with annual incomes at or below

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250% of the federal poverty level unless they are found to be voluntarily impoverished.

These stipulations help protect vulnerable families from unnecessary hardships by providing individuals a more reasonable timeframe to fulfill their obligations and allow individuals to maintain employment while addressing their child support obligations.

The bill's emphasis on fairness and transparency in enforcement aligns with the Caucus' commitment to advancing public policies that are just and equitable, particularly for Black and minority communities, historically burdened by discriminatory practices.

Senate Bill 15 represents a balanced and thoughtful approach to child support enforcement. It prioritizes accountability while protecting vulnerable families, ensuring that enforcement measures are applied equitably and do not exacerbate existing inequalities. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports Senate Bill 15 and urges you to make a favorable report.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland