

Dear Members of the **House Judiciary Committee**,

This testimony is being submitted with Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. I am also writing in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of **District 46. I am a workforce development professional in the City of Baltimore and I am a board member in my local Canton community association. I am testifying in support of HB0110, Child Support – Suspension of Driver's Licenses.**

Under the current system, noncustodial parents who are 60 days behind on child support are automatically entered into the suspension program with limited opportunity to contest or show that they are eligible for one of the many exemptions provided in the law. Taking away a driver's license does not resolve missed payments. Some surveys have shown that 42 percent of people with a history of suspension lost their jobs when they had their driving privileges suspended. Job loss was experienced across all income and age groups; however it was most significant among low-income and younger drivers.¹

A license allows parents to get to work, see their children, and pay child support. More than half of Marylanders travel outside their county to get to work². Public transit is not a given substitute, either. I know from my work in Baltimore City workforce development that a typical Baltimorean can only get 8.5% of the region's jobs in under an hour using transit, and Central Maryland has lower-than-standard reliability.³ A recent Banner investigation tracking children's commutes to school found that a quarter of them had a late or missing bus and took on average half an hour (outdoors) to make a connection. I experience this personally commuting from Canton to my office downtown.

The new approach offered in HB0110 requires that before someone's license is suspended for failure to pay child support, they must be notified and have the opportunity to request a hearing before a judge. It also is in compliance with the requirements of federal law (42 USC 666(a)) which requires that states have the authority to suspend licenses "in appropriate cases". The current automatic suspension system is neither required or "appropriate" -- It is harmful and counterproductive.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child Support – Suspension of Driver's Licenses (HB0110)**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Preston Ford
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1 <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/business/research/reports/FHWA-NJ-2007-020-V1.pdf>

2 JOTF fact sheet

3 <https://cmtalliance.org/download/2023-transportation-report-card/>