



January 28

Testimony on House Bill 120
Family Law - Child Support - Capacity of Minors to File Action
House Judiciary Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits urges your support of House Bill 120, which would grant minors who are legal and custodial parents the capacity to file for child support. This bill ensures equitable access to legal avenues for minors raising children and aligns with Maryland's commitment to fostering a just and equitable society.

Maryland Nonprofits represents the interests of over 40,000 nonprofit organizations across the state and our 1,600 members. Our organization is dedicated to advancing equity and ensuring that public policies address systemic inequities to provide families with the resources they need to thrive.

Minors who are custodial parents face unique challenges in securing resources for their children. Many lack financial stability or family support systems necessary to meet their child's basic needs. Without access to child support, these parents and their children face heightened risks of poverty, hunger, and homelessness. This is particularly troubling in a state where 38% of households already struggle to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and child care.

House Bill 120 acknowledges the responsibilities of young custodial parents and ensures they have the same legal rights as adult custodial parents. By enabling them to pursue child support, Maryland provides these families with a pathway toward economic stability.

Allowing minors to access child support benefits not only improves their immediate financial security but also contributes to better long-term outcomes for children. Financial stability is closely tied to improvements in health, education, and overall well-being. If passed, it is our hope that the court system works alongside these individuals to navigate the legal process of filing suit as the process in itself can be financially cumbersome and hard to navigate. Supporting this bill represents an investment in Maryland's next generation and a critical step toward reducing the societal costs of childhood poverty.

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 120.

