

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony for House Bill 218

Family Law – Child Support

TO: Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 20, 2025

POSITION: Support with Amendments

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 House Bill 218 with two amendments.**

One amendment would exempt those who earn 250% of the federal poverty level (\$38,000) or less from having their driver's license suspended for child support arrearages, which is consistent with legislation that has come before the Judicial Proceedings Committee in recent years. The other amendment would authorize the Comptroller's Office through a Memorandum of Understanding to share taxpayer information to ascertain which obligors meet this exemption

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. It is counter-productive.

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.

The 250% language as a basis for the obligor to object and request an investigation and a hearing would become just one more factor that in practice does not occur. That is the reason why Senator Watson and Senator Muse have offered legislation for several years to address this situation and this committee has agreed with them.

JOTF supports an amendment making the 250% of poverty language an exemption to having a driver's license suspended. We also support an additional amendment that says: Notwithstanding Section 13-202 of the Tax General Article, the Comptroller's Office may share taxpayer information with the Department of Human Services for determining if an obligor is eligible for the exemption from having their driver's license suspended.

For these reasons, JOTF supports House Bill 218 with amendments and urges a favorable report for the amended bill.

For more information, contact:

Mark Woodard / Senior Public Policy Advocate / Mark@jotf.org