

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

This testimony is being submitted by 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. We are working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of District 40 in Baltimore City. I am testifying in **support of HB0110, Child Support – Suspension of Driver's Licenses**.



Showing Up for Racial Justice

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. 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

While Baltimore and the metropolitan region have a variety of transit options, they are often not suitable for daily commuting to the workplace. Local transit may not be aligned (both in terms of timing and locations) with the work commuting needs of lower income communities; it may assume lengthy amounts of time to commute which may not be feasible for working families who are raising children; and as delays are commonplace, local transit is not always reliable enough for strict work schedules. **From my own experience, it is not uncommon for bus transit in Baltimore to take upwards of three times as long as car commuting and require long wait times for transferring between lines, not to mention inevitable delays. For individuals and families coordinating childcare and varied work and school schedules -- transit is not currently a direct substitute for driving in the Baltimore area.**

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,
Christina L. Bell
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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/>