

KAREN R. TOLES, J.D.
Legislative District 25
Prince George's County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

Subcommittees

Civil Law and Procedure

Public Safety



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 203
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3524 · 301-858-3524
800-492-7122 Ext. 3524
Karen.Toles@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 20, 2025

Chair Luke Clippinger

Vice Chair Sandy Bartlett

House Judiciary Committee

House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Driver's Licenses - Suspension for Child Support Arrearages – Exception-HB681

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and my Colleagues of the Judiciary Committee:

Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on House Bill 681. I am pleased to present testimony (again this year) on legislation concerning the suspension of drivers' licenses for child support arrearages.

The consensus support reached among sponsors and advocates, highlights the collaborative effort behind this bill. Such alignment reflects a comprehensive approach to addressing the complexities of child support enforcement and licensing issues.

This year- The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland has made this a priority bill, because the issues of suspending driver's licenses historically impact minorities particularly black men more than any other group of individuals. Often, the Obliger is unaware that their license is suspended. Under certain circumstances, employers require their employees to have a valid license, therefore having a suspended license could have irreparable harm on the Obligers.

The Census Bureau's report that nearly 40% of Marylanders commute outside their county for employment emphasizes the widespread mobility in the state's workforce. Notably, this trend is more pronounced in lower-income communities of color.

The existing provision in Maryland Code Ann. Family Law § 10-119, mandating license suspension after 60 days of nonpayment of child support, raises concerns about the potentially harsh consequences for obligors. The imposition of a \$500 fine and the possibility of arrest further exacerbate the punitive nature of this policy. It is crucial to acknowledge that child support debt can disproportionately impact individuals, irrespective of their financial status.

HB681 is a crucial step in ensuring fairness, particularly for those with an income at or below 250% of the federal poverty level or \$37,650 annually. The exemption provision recognizes the financial challenges faced by some obligors, while the extension to 120 days provides a reasonable timeframe for compliance.

It is essential to strike a balance between enforcing child support obligations and considering the economic circumstances of the obligors. If enacted, HB681 will contribute to a more equitable approach in handling child support, particularly the lower income obligors within the state. Colleagues, I kindly ask for a favorable report, please note this bill passed out of JUD committee last year.

Sincerely,

Delegate Karen R. Toles