

HB681 - Driver's License Suspension Exemption-FAV-

Uploaded by: Ameer Vora

Position: FAV

House Bill 681

Child Support – Driver’s License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders
In the House Judiciary Committee
Hearing on February 20, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) submits its testimony on HB 681 at the request of Delegate Toles.

MLA appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of this vital legislation. MLA is a private, nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services to thousands of low-income Maryland residents in civil matters. MLA represents both custodial and non-custodial parents in family law cases. In doing this work, we have found that wrongful driver’s license suspensions for alleged child support arrears are a recurrent and widespread problem. Driver’s license suspensions disproportionately harm low-income families, and the Maryland Child Support Enforcement Agency (“CSA”)’s automated driver’s license suspension system fails to reliably provide notice and the opportunity for a hearing prior to license suspension.

Driver’s license suspensions are not effective as a child support enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and do not have the ability to pay. License suspensions create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Once a parent’s driver’s license is suspended, they are unable to contribute in other ways—for example, transporting their child to school, doctor’s appointments, visits with family, etc. Further, most child support is collected through wage garnishment and tax refund intercepts. These collection mechanisms both require the parent to have lawful, steady employment—to which driver’s license suspension is an impediment.

Three bills have been introduced to Maryland’s legislative body this session presenting potential solutions to this problem. **HB 110**, directly addresses MLA’s concerns about the lack of due process within the current suspension system. It presents a systemic fix, where a parent’s driver’s license could only be suspended after a judicial determination of appropriateness has been made, based on a number of factors that take into account the parent’s ability to pay and the individual circumstances of the family as a whole. **HB 681** does not directly address the due process concerns, but it creates a much-needed exemption to license suspension for low-income parents that, if implemented correctly, would help MLA clients and low-income communities tremendously. **HB 218** also addresses the harms of license suspensions for low-income families, but, rather than creating an affirmative exemption to screen out low-income parents as HB 681 does, it allows parents to request an investigation of the suspension based on their low-income status.

HB 681 seeks to significantly reduce the number of license suspensions by exempting parents with incomes “not greater than 250% of the federal poverty guidelines” from driver’s license suspension. This would aid low-income families by tempering the harmful effects of driver’s license suspensions.

The numbers and the absence of due process.

In 2023, the MVA, at the express direction of CSA, suspended 20,512 licenses for alleged child support arrears. **Of those 20,512 suspensions, only 34 hearing requests** were made to the Office of Administrative Hearings (“OAH”). This astonishing disparity is a predictable consequence of CSA’s consistent failure to inform parents of their rights¹ to request an investigation, to receive a decision with the results of said investigation in writing, and to appeal that decision to OAH. Failure to inform parents of those rights violates constitutional due process, Md. Code, Family Law § 10-119, and COMAR 07.07.15.05. Certainly, if parents were informed of their right to request a hearing with OAH prior to suspension, more than 34 hearing requests would have been made out of the 20,512 suspensions in 2023.

“Adequate notice is integral to the due process right to a fair hearing because the ‘right to be heard has little reality or worth unless one is informed.’” *Mullane v. Cent. Hanover Bank & Tr. Co.*, 339 U.S. 306, 314 (1950).

Many parents have no idea their license is suspended until they are pulled over for a traffic stop.

What would have been a minor traffic violation then turns into a criminal citation. A criminal citation serves as another barrier to employment and carries with it collateral consequences ranging from their car being impounded, job loss, missed shifts and lost wages, court dates, points on their license, increased insurance costs, fines, and even incarceration. Not receiving notice prior to suspension is especially common for low-income parents, as they often do not have a stable home or mailing address.

The current automated system keeps many low-income parents in a perpetual cycle of threatened or actual license suspension.

On its face, the current law already has enumerated exceptions that limit when CSA can suspend driver’s licenses. The text of Md. Code, Family Law § 10-119 has exceptions for parents who have a disability, parents who are making consistent payments on their arrearage balance per a payment agreement, and parents who need their license for employment. But MLA regularly sees clients who fit squarely into an exception and still have their driver’s license suspended.

MLA assists clients who fall under exceptions in the law with license reinstatement. However, reinstatement is merely a temporary solution. If the parent still has an arrearage balance of 60 days or more, it is only a matter of time before they are re-selected and again referred to the MVA for suspension. We must warn clients to be on constant alert of being re-selected for suspension by the automated system used by CSA to suspend driver’s licenses.

¹ Md. Code, Family Law § 10-119 and COMAR 07.07.15.05

Adding this exemption for low-income parents will help children and families by making license suspensions more effective as a child support enforcement mechanism. Targeting those who have the ability to pay would allow CSA to focus their resources on pursuing those specific cases where the parent is purposefully hiding or withholding money, or voluntarily impoverishing themselves.

The current system does not protect parents from license suspension when custody has changed and the former non-custodial parent is now the primary caretaker of the child.

Child custody can change rapidly in low-income families. For example, custody may vary depending on which parent has more reliable housing or income at any given point in time. While a change in custody might happen overnight, a legal modification of a custody or child support order in the Circuit Court takes at minimum a year, and often longer. For low-income parents who cannot afford attorneys, navigating the court system is extremely difficult. What is already a long process can be made more complicated if the other parent does not have a stable address where they can be properly served. It is sometimes while waiting on this lengthy court process that MLA clients (who now have custody of their child) have their license suspended.

MLA clients have their licenses suspended and are often denied reinstatement requests by CSA, even when:

- Custody has changed, and the child now lives with them;
- They are making payments towards their arrearage balance;
- They need their driver's license for their current job or a potential job opportunity or interview;
- The suspension causes them to lose their job;
- They have a verified disability and inability to work and make payments; and
- They need their license to be an involved and active parent.

The following are examples of MLA clients who have suffered the harmful consequences of improper and inappropriate driver's license suspension:

- Mr. R is an MLA client who was granted sole custody of his daughter in the Juvenile Court, after the mother was found to be unfit due to abuse and neglect. He provided a copy of the custody order to CSA, showing that custody had changed and he is now the custodial parent. **Mr. R's driver's license was still suspended**, which he learned only after being pulled over for a minor driving infraction. **Mr. R received a criminal citation for driving on a suspended license.**
- Mr. P is an MLA client who was granted sole custody of his son in the Circuit Court. The Circuit Court also granted Mr. P's request to officially terminate his obligation to pay child

support, in light of the change in custody. Mr. P provided copies of the court orders to CSA, but **his driver's license was still suspended**. Mr. P drives trucks for a living, and **he was terminated from his job** due to his suspended license.

- Mr. G is an MLA client who drives rideshare. Mr. G provided proof to CSA of his weekly Uber rides and the fact that **license suspension would cause him to lose his employment** and therefore his income, but CSA refused to lift his license suspension unless he made a large lump sum payment.
- Mr. M is an MLA client whose children are all now adults. He still owes child support arrears, but he is disabled and his only source of income is Supplemental Security Income (“SSI”) disability benefits. Mr. M has been threatened with license suspensions **five times in a one-year period**. Each time, he goes to his local child support office and provides proof of his disability and continued receipt of SSI. CSA requires him to make a lump sum payment to have his license reinstated, despite the fact that he is supposed to be excepted from license suspension under Maryland law, and SSI is exempt from collections for child support under both Maryland and federal law.

HB 681 will ensure Maryland's compliance with federal law.

Concerns have been raised about Maryland's federal funding, but this bill will in no way negatively impact Maryland's federal funding. The controlling federal laws, 42 U.S.C. §§ 666(a)(16) and 654(20), require only that states have the authority to suspend or restrict driver's licenses “*in appropriate cases*,” to “increase the effectiveness of the program.” By exempting parents who are 250% below the federal poverty line, HB 681 makes clear that it is not appropriate to suspend driver's licenses in situations where the suspension will hurt, rather than help, families. This bill will help to stop the inappropriate and erroneous suspensions that have harmed MLA clients, such as the ones described above.

This bill is also in line with the 2020 legislation introduced by then-Attorney General Frosh and passed by the Maryland legislature that stopped the MVA from suspending driver's licenses for fines and fees. The logic behind the passage of that legislation was simple: people need driver's licenses to secure and maintain employment so that they are able to pay their fines and fees. That simple logic applies here: **parents need driver's licenses to secure and maintain employment so that they are able to pay their child support**.

The purpose of the child support enforcement program is to increase economic stability for children and families, but CSA's current driver's license suspension system, which ensnares and punishes every parent who falls behind 60 days or more on child support, **perpetuates the cycle of poverty** for low-income families. If this legislation is implemented correctly, it would have long-term positive impacts on low-income communities and on Maryland's economy as a whole.

However, given that the current automated system used by CSA to suspend licenses presently does not screen for whether parents fall into one of the existing statutory exceptions, MLA has serious concerns about the implementation of this bill. **In order to accomplish the true systemic impact that is intended from this bill, it must be properly implemented by requiring CSA to affirmatively exempt and screen out those who are 250% below the federal poverty guidelines from their automated system.**

Therefore, MLA urges the committee to give a favorable report to this bill, HB 681, and also urges the committee to consider further requirements or oversight of the implementation. MLA also urges the committee to consider the joint passage of HB 110, which would remove the current automated system and therefore ensure that this bill, and the exemption for low-income parents, is properly implemented. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important legislation. If you have any questions, please contact me at avora@mdl.org

SB0015_HB0681_FAV_AprilleHamilton.pdf

Uploaded by: Aprille Hamilton

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681:

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

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Aprille Hamilton

My name is Aprille Hamilton, a resident of District 8, and I support Senate Bill 15 to ensure that driver's license suspensions for inability to pay child support are used in appropriate cases.

I have an 11-year-old daughter from a previous relationship and a one-year-old I am raising alone. I left my last relationship after surviving multiple domestic violence situations with my ex, the 11-year-old's father, and then moved out. It was not easy. I struggled to secure housing and ended up in a shelter.

At this point, I lost custody of my daughter, and my ex then placed me on child support, where I had my wages garnished and my license suspended. My quality of life plummeted significantly, and I had to reach back out to him, my abuser, and plead with him to drop the order, which he eventually did. I am blessed that the situation worked the way that it did, but no one should have to plead with their abuser to repeal a child support case.

Years later, I moved to Alaska to work as a waitress on a cruise ship. During this time, he placed me on child support again for my daughter, and because I was not in the state, I did not receive the court order to push back. I owe him over \$20,000 in arrears, and there is **no way** that I can pay this debt. My license has been in a constant cycle of suspension with a looming threat of incarceration for inability to pay.

I am also watching the DHS' Child Support Bill closely and disagree strongly with taking personal injury awards for inability to pay. I have a settlement coming my way from my former workplace for damages done to me, and I don't think that it is just to have that money forwarded immediately to my abuser.

I have been frantically searching for employment opportunities but am constantly denied because I do not have a license. If this bill were to pass, I could make a case in court, retrieve my license, and support my son. Please pass these bills!

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: Barbara Hauck

Position: FAV

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of District 45. I am a voter, homeowner, and active community member. **I am testifying in support of Child support license suspension exception (HB0681).**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay nonmoving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found that 42% 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.² This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support-driver's license suspension exception (HB0681)**. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Barbara Hauck
3420 Harford Road
Baltimore, MD 21218
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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□ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

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

HB0681 Child Support - Driver's License Suspension

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0681

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

Bill Sponsor: Delegates Toles

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0681 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Having gone through a divorce in Maryland myself, I know firsthand the fear and anxiety that comes with relying on an ex to do the right thing for a child and in Maryland drivers licenses of deadbeat parents can be suspended. However, this bill takes into account those parents who cannot legitimately afford child support. If their individual income for the current year is not greater than 250% of the federal poverty guidelines. However, this exemption does not apply if the obligor was determined to be voluntarily impoverished at the time the most recent child support order was entered.

While this is a gut wrenching situation, HB0681 is a game-changer for parents in similar situations. This bill ensures that individuals who are significantly behind on their child support payments face real consequences. It proposes altering the circumstances under which the Child Support Administration may notify the Motor Vehicle Administration of an individual's child support arrearages, leading to the suspension of the individual's driver's license or driving privileges. Additionally, it requires the court, after establishing a child support order, to send a copy of the guideline calculation and the order to the Child Support Administration.

This bill is crucial because it promotes accountability and ensures that parents fulfill their financial responsibilities to their children. By implementing these measures, HB0681 helps enforce child support orders and provides a robust mechanism to address non-compliance. It supports the well-being of children and families by ensuring that child support payments are made, ultimately benefiting all Maryland residents.

Maryland is one of the most expensive states to live in, and we cannot allow parents to shirk their responsibilities to our most vulnerable and valuable members of society due to lifestyle changes. The Maryland Legislative Coalition strongly supports this bill and recommends a FAVORABLE report in committee.

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: Christina Nemphos

Position: FAV

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of District 40 in Baltimore City. **I am testifying in support of Child support license suspension (exception) (HB0681).**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. **Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent.** Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families -- especially considering the gaps in and limitations of Maryland's public transit. A New Jersey survey found 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.² This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support- driver's license suspension (HB0681).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Christina L. Bell
1301 W 42nd St., Baltimore, Md 21211
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

² <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/business/research/reports/FHWA-NJ-2007-020-V1.pdf>

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Uploaded by: Christopher Dews

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681:

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

FROM: Christopher Dews, Policy Consultant (Representing Out for Justice)

Out for Justice, Inc. (OFJ) is an organization comprised of individuals directly and indirectly impacted by the criminal legal system advocating for reforming policies and practices that adversely affect successful reintegration into society. OFJ supports Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681, which would repeal the punitive practice of driver's license suspensions for lower-income child support obligors.

Mobility is key in Maryland's regional economy. The Census Bureau reported that almost [40% of Marylanders travel outside their county for employment](#). This statistic is more pronounced for lower-income communities of color where there is a scarcity of jobs available by public transit. [Only 8.5% of jobs in the Baltimore region can be reached within one hour, one way by public transit](#). Thus, a valid driver's license and a vehicle are necessary for economic sustainability.

An Abell Foundation [report](#) found that across Maryland, 50 percent of noncustodial parents in the state child support program caseload were employed in 2017, and 43 percent of these earned minimum wages or less but owe an average of \$10,000 in unpaid arrearages. In Baltimore, where OFJ services most of its clients, 57 percent of noncustodial parents were employed, and 47 percent earned the minimum wages or less but owed an average of \$13,300 in unpaid arrearages. They will never pay down this debt, especially when the current law magnifies the issue by crippling their mobility.

[Maryland Code Ann., Fam. Law § 10-119](#) states that upon 60 days of nonpayment of child support, an obligor shall have their license or privilege to drive suspended. Beyond this, [Maryland Code Ann., Transportation §16-303](#) states that driving on an invalid license (suspended, canceled, or revoked) in Maryland is a crime punishable by up to (1) one year in jail, a \$1000 fine, or both. Until [recently](#), driving on a license suspended for child support came with similar penalties. As such, child support debt triggers a suspended driver's license, arrest, or hefty fines, further complicating the ability of low-wage workers to secure employment and make payments.

Additionally, [a report cited](#) by the Abell Foundation found that **42% of individuals who had their licenses suspended lost jobs as a result of the suspension, 45% of those who lost jobs could not find**

another job, and 88% of those who were able to find another job reported a decrease in income (Voorhees, 2006).

[Federal Code 42 U.S.C.A. § 666 \(a\)](#) demands that all States have laws that “increase the effectiveness of the [child support enforcement] program which the state administers” and allows the State to withhold, suspend, or restrict licenses of individuals owing child support in [“appropriate cases” \(16\)](#). No evidence suggests suspending an individual’s driver’s license improves arrears collection for persons making less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or \$38k annually. However, Maryland continues to suspend lower-income obligors, arguing a need to comply with federal law.

OFJ believes that driver’s license suspensions for workers who make less than \$38k annually cannot be considered “appropriate” or increasing “effectiveness” as it (1) wastes taxpayer dollars in collections enforcement, (2) prohibits and eliminates access to employment for workers and job seekers, and (3) heightens tensions between the custodial parties which, in turn, decreases compliance rates. As such, Maryland should pass Senate Bill 139 to repeal driver’s license suspensions as a penalty for obligors who make less than \$38k per year (250% FPL) and ensure that the state is not preventing obligors from securing the employment needed to pay their child support payments. California passed similar provisions with [SB1055](#) (2022), eliminating license suspensions for obligors with a household income at or below 70% of the county’s median income, which is far more expansive than our considerations.

If Maryland truly wants to stay in compliance with federal statutes regarding child support enforcement, the most effective way to accomplish this would be to ensure that all non-custodial parents have the financial standing to remain in compliance with their obligation. Suspending licenses for lower-income obligors contradicts the stated purpose of increasing compliance in child support payments and engagement with family where appropriate. It cripples the primary way the Child Support Enforcement Agency can collect (wage garnishments) by eliminating access to employment needed to pay down arrears. We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 15/House Bill 681 for these reasons.

The Undersigned Organizations/Individuals Support of SB0015/ HB0681

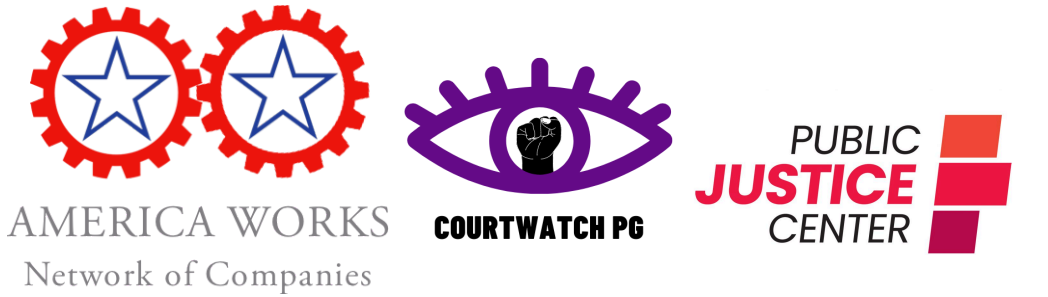
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| 1. Out for Justice | 16. HTP Homes |
| 2. Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) | 17. Helping Oppressed People Excel |
| 3. Winning Strategies | 18. Helping Ourselves Transform |
| 4. BetterU Construction Training | 19. Public Justice Center |
| 5. Maryland Legal Aid | 20. Civic Works Center for Sustainable Careers |
| 6. University of Baltimore School of Law | 21. 1199 SEIU |
| 7. Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service | 22. Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition |
| 8. Center for Urban Families | 23. PIVOT Program |
| 9. Showing Up for Racial Justice | 24. Economic Action Maryland |
| 10. Office of the Public Defender | 25. Northeast Catholic Community |
| 11. Life After Release | 26. Baltimore Mutual Aid for Mental Health |
| 12. CASH Campaign of Maryland | 27. Marylanders Against Poverty |
| 13. America Works | 28. Cornerstone Full Gospel Church |
| 14. Court Watch PG | 29. Fines and Fees Justice Center |
| 15. Consumer Auto | |

For more information, contact:

Christopher Dews / Policy Consultant / Cdews@cgagroup.com / 301-412-5399

30. Baltimore Action Legal Team

31. John Harden



For more information, contact:
Christopher Dews / Policy Consultant / Cdews@cgagroup.com / 301-412-5399



BALTIMORE ACTION LEGAL TEAM

For more information, contact:

Christopher Dews / Policy Consultant / Cdews@cgagroup.com / 301-412-5399

SB0015_HB0681_FAV_CorrineBerry.docx.pdf

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Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15 / HOUSE BILL 681:

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: **Corrine Berry**

I am a resident of District 25, and I support Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681 to ensure that driver's license suspensions for inability to pay child support are used only in appropriate cases. The system is currently unfair and has been used by scorned lovers as a tool of vengeance and control, as in my case.

I have an eight-year-old son who I am currently paying child support for. My child's father placed me on child support out of revenge when after we broke up. We were happily together for about six years when my son was born, but thanks to his abusive character, drinking habits, and general disrespectfulness, I chose to separate from him. While I was struggling with breast cancer, he filed paperwork to take full custody of my son.

Thankfully, the judge granted us joint custody during the summer of 2022. In 2023, my ex claimed I was doing little to help my son as I didn't have the resources to provide since my job at the post office cut my hours - a job that I have since lost due to an injury and constantly going back to the courts at his command to fight over custody. He then decided to file for child support and kept me away from my son for nine months. To be clear, I was already taking care of my son and complying with the court orders despite my injuries and dealing with cancer. Yet, I was on still placed on child support, accumulating arrears and had my taxes intercepted. Moreover, when I did pay, my payments were directly for child support - none of those payments counted towards my arrears - creating a mountain of debt.

I am currently \$17,033 in arrears and being charged \$711 monthly in child support. My license has been suspended, and it has been challenging for me to get to interviews, comply with my custody orders, transport my son, or generally live independently. I've been leveraging family and friends, but it won't be long until they are overburdened, and I will have to risk driving on a suspended license to survive.

I support Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681 as it would prevent vengeful people like my ex from taking advantage of the child support system to harm others and protect me from having my driver's license suspended. I urge a favorable report.

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: Daryl Yoder

Position: FAV

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of District 44A and a longtime volunteer with Out for Justice. **I am testifying in support of Child support license suspension (exception (HB0681)).**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found 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.² This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support-driver's license suspension (HB0681).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Daryl Yoder
309 Glenmore Ave., Catonsville, MD 21228
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

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

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Uploaded by: Eric Smith

Position: FAV

The Real Dadvocate



Winning Strategies: Fatherhood, The Courts & Custody, Incorporated

Contact Number – 443- 768-8158

Post Office Box 23062

Baltimore, Maryland 21203

Email: winningstrategies.fcc@gmail.com

[Http://www.winningstrategiesfcc.org](http://www.winningstrategiesfcc.org)

Therealdadvocate.com

February 18, 2025

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Subject: BUDGET & TAXIATION COMMITTEE - N00B

The Honorable [Recipient's Name]

[Recipient's Title]

[Recipient's Office]

[Recipient's Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Subject: Support for Legislative Measures Addressing Child Support Arrearages and Fairness in Enforcement

Dear [Recipient's Name],

On behalf of Winning Strategies: Fatherhood, The Courts and Custody, and the citizens who support our guiding principles, we are writing to express our strong support for legislative measures aimed at reforming Maryland's child support enforcement system. Specifically, we urge the passage of House Bill 681 (Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders), House Bill 110 (Child Support - Suspension of Driver's Licenses), House Bill 218 (DHS' Child Support Enforcement Act), and House Bill 881 (Family Investment Program and SNAP Benefits). These bills are critical in ensuring that child support policies are fair, effective,

The Real Dadvocate

and do not impose undue hardship on fathers who are actively working toward financial stability and parental responsibility.

A key issue that must be addressed is the accuracy of child support arrearages assigned to fathers. It is essential that enforcement agencies conduct thorough investigations to determine the actual amounts owed, ensuring that fathers are not burdened with erroneous or inflated arrearages. Additionally, we advocate for a legislative review of the current policy that limits mothers to receiving only two-thirds of the arrearages owed to them. The full amount of arrearages should be paid to the custodial parent, rather than a portion being redirected elsewhere. These adjustments will promote transparency, fairness, and confidence in the child support system. Given the urgency of these matters, we request that your committee work toward implementing these changes within the next nine months. Timely action is crucial in preventing further financial and personal hardships on parents and children alike. Reforming these policies will not only support fathers in meeting their obligations but also ensure that children receive the financial support they need without unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles. We appreciate your attention to these critical issues and look forward to your leadership in advancing these reforms. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further and collaborate on solutions that benefit Maryland families. Please feel free to contact us at your earliest convenience to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,
eric d. smith
Executive Director,
The Real Dadvocate
443-768-8158

Other emails of support:

Family Law Reform
Inbox
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Cyrus Tittle JR. <tittlesllc@gmail.com>
to me

Mon, Feb 17, 2:24 PM (1 day ago)

The Real Dadvocate

I support House Bill 110 Stopping Drivers License - Child Support Suspension of Driver's License

I support House Bill 0681 Start investigating Child Support Driver's License for Arrearages and Court Orders

I support HB 0275 - Multifamily Adjustment

I support House Bill 881 Giving Mothers 100% of the money they are owed Family Investment Program and SNAP Benefits

I support the following

Inbox

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Stevie monie

Mon, Feb 17, 9:38 AM (1 day ago)

to me

Hello my name is Steven Vaughn I am a father of 4

I support HB 110 - Child Support Suspension of Driver's License

I support HB 0681 - Child Support Driver's License for Arrearages and Court Orders

I support HB 0275 - Multifamily Adjustment

I support HB 881 -Family Investment Program and SNAP Benefits

Sent from my iPhone

Thank you Steven Vaughn

Family Law Bills

Inbox

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Winning Strategies <winningstrategies.fcc@gmail.com>

Sun, Feb 16, 10:56 AM (2 days ago)

to corwin.melvin, Stevie, Richard, g.chavae, Gregory, Regina, Leatrice, Goldenkendra88, Lotty, btimes, devon, Brandon, t_bones28, Phillip, Berni, Chantell, Amy, antbrooks64, fgilliam1109, Donta, Donaniece, Donitra, Donawiggins, Donta, DawnJackson3211, Baltimore, s.sanders704, Sadiq, Sahmra, Sherree, sheltonflemming, Shana y, Gwendolin

The Real Dadvocate

Our nonprofit wants to impact legislation for fatherhood fairness bills. The bills listed help to make fathers coparents and there is a bill that helps mothers get 100% of the child support they are owed. (Please share this with your friends and family)

We need the email by Monday night at 11:59pm.

Please send me an email stating-

I support HB 110 - Child Support Suspension of Driver's License

I support HB 0681 - Child Support Driver's License for Arrearages and Court Orders

I support HB 0275 - Multifamily Adjustment

I support HB 881 -Family Investment Program and SNAP Benefits

Cc: File

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: Erica Palmisano

Position: FAV

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of District 12A. **I am testifying in support of Child support license suspension (exception (HB0681)).**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found 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.² This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support- driver's license suspension (HB0681).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Erica Palmisano
5580 Vantage Point Rd, Apt 5, Columbia, MD 21044
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

² <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/business/research/reports/FHWA-NJ-2007-020-V1.pdf>

testimony2025hb681.pdf

Uploaded by: Franz Schneiderman

Position: FAV



Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee
HB 681 – Child Support – Driver’s License Suspensions for Arrearages and Court Orders
Position: Favorable

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members, House Judiciary Committee

Feb. 20, 2025

I'm a consumer advocate and Executive Director of Consumer Auto, a non-profit group that works to foster safety, transparency, and fair treatment for Maryland drivers and car buyers.

We support **HB 681** because it will protect many low- and middle-income drivers who owe child support against the burdensome and counter-productive punishment of losing their right to drive – a sanction that not only can put lower-income Maryland drivers at risk of serious further punishment but undermines their ability to earn a living and, ultimately, to meet their child support obligations.

Paying child support is an important obligation. But for many lower-income, non-custodial parents, it's a difficult burden to meet. As a 2019 Abell Foundation report found, many noncustodial parents “struggle to find and maintain full-time work at sufficient wages to support themselves and pay their child support obligations.”¹ With the median income of non-custodial parents statewide less than \$23,000 and 25% receiving supplemental food benefits (as the Abell report found in 2019²), it's not surprising that many parents fall behind in their child support payments.

And when that happens, Maryland law makes it very easy for them to lose their licenses, allowing driver's licenses to be suspended when parents are 60 days behind in their payments. But when a parent loses the right to drive, that only makes it harder for him or her to get to work and access the job opportunities that could enable them to meet their needs and child support obligations. This is especially true in Baltimore City, where weak public transit systems and the movement of many job centers to the suburbs makes it very difficult and time-consuming to reach remunerative work without a vehicle.

Indeed, the Abell Foundation report found that 42% of those who lost their licenses also lost their jobs, and that 45% of those who lost jobs struggled to find another.³

Once a person's license is suspended, he or she is also subject to a up to one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine for driving on a suspended or revoked license. When people violate the law by driving

¹ https://abell.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Child20Support20Report202_20_202020edits2020-20web20version.pdf

² Ibid,

³ Ibid.



Auto Consumer Alliance
13900 Laurel Lakes Avenue, Suite 100
Laurel, MD 20707

– as many people do, in part because they need to do so to meet their obligations – that can extend a cycle of poverty and punishment that often leaves people with even greater legal difficulties, more deeply in debt – and less able to pay their child support and meet other needs.

Suspending the licenses of lower-income Marylanders who owe child support adds to their financial and legal challenges as it undermines their ability to pay their debts and to support themselves and their families.

That's part of the reason the Abell Foundation report recommended stopping the practice of suspending the driver's licenses of lower-income Marylanders who owe child support.⁴ And why, as **HB 681** mandates, it makes good sense to end the practice of doing so for Marylanders who make 250% of federal poverty level wages or less.

We support HB 681 and ask you to give it a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,

Franz Schneiderman
Consumer Auto

⁴ Ibid.

Child Support-Driver License Suspension 18FEB 202

Uploaded by: Jan Kleinman

Position: FAV

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of District 46. Having a personal connection with a young parent struggling to make her budget go far enough, I can see clearly the following excruciating dilemma. Someone who owes child support could find themselves with both bills and a suspended driving license.

That situation means the person can neither pay their bills nor have a job! **I am testifying in support of Child support license suspension (exception (HB0681)).**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found 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.² This bill would give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support-driver's license suspension (HB0681).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

1

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

2

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

Sincerely,
Jan Kleinman
250 President ST Unit 508
Baltimore, MD 21202
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: John Ford

Position: FAV

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 Child support license suspension (exception) (HB0681).**

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non-moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

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It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support-driver's license suspension (HB0681).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Preston Ford

529 S East Ave, Baltimore, MD 21224

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

² <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/business/research/reports/FHWA-NJ-2007-020-V1.pdf>

SB0015_HB0681_FAV_OFJ_JonathanWilliams.pdf

Uploaded by: Jonathan Williams

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681
Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Jonathan Williams

My name is Jonathan Williams, and I live in Baltimore City. I support Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681- Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders.

I am a father of a 5-year-old whose mother placed me on child support. After we signed the child support order, we had to wait 6 months for the judge to sign before the order went into effect. I was initially given misleading and/or incomplete information. I was told that I would be unable to make child support payments until the judge signed the order and that payments would not start until the order was signed. The judge eventually signed the order in August of 2017. It wasn't until I got a notice that my license for child support arrears of over \$9000 was suspended. When I signed the order, I knew my monthly payments would be \$840, and court fees would be included. Once the court fees were paid, the costs would drop down to \$640 per month.

At the time, I was bringing home around \$2600 monthly as an IT Site Coordinator. I started driving for Uber part-time to supplement my income and help pay my child support when the time came. Both jobs required that I have a valid driver's license. My expenses at the time included a \$1200 mortgage, \$500 car payment, \$160 car insurance, \$250 utilities, \$200 for gas, groceries, and miscellaneous purchases. At the end of the month, I had about \$300 left over. While driving for Uber, I averaged about \$20 per hour, which would have given me a max of \$800 per month in extra income.

The immediate arrival of a \$9000+ bill was a huge setback. It was unexpected and instantly put me in a financial bind.

When I contacted The Department of Human Resources, no one I talked to cared even to listen and understand my situation. I would get similar statements - "You can get your license reinstated when you pay all of your back pay," or "You should have saved the money during those months." It appeared that I wouldn't get any assistance until I paid what was owed. At this point, I gave up because doing the right thing seemed more like a punishment than getting monetary help for my son.



The website even states: *“You have the right to request a review for a modification if there has been a change in circumstances since the order was entered, or if three years have passed since the order was entered or last reviewed for modification. Examples of changes in circumstances that may be grounds for a modification are significant changes in income, changes in work-related daycare costs, changes in health care costs, a change in custody, or a change in the child's financial needs. Contact the Customer Care Center at 1-800-332-6347 for additional information.”*

Nothing in this paragraph was even considered for discussion when I called DHS.

The result was that I had to short-sell my house before it went into foreclosure, and my car was voluntarily repossessed. I can't drive my car because my license is suspended, so I can't drive for Uber to earn the extra money to afford my house and car and pay my child support. Not having a license has prevented me from finding a high-paying job because those jobs are not readily available in Baltimore City.

The repossession resulted in an extra \$9000 of debt over the \$8000 I already owed. At this point, I'm now \$17000 in debt and have lost two jobs. I've lost my home, car, and job and am in debt. This domino effect had me a couple of steps away from going to jail for not paying child support. How can someone pay child support when they have lost every means of paying it?

My testimony sheds some light on and understanding of what many parents have gone through and are going through. The rules and regulations, as they currently are, in some situations, hurt more than help. Please consider that some parents want the best for their child(ren) and that situations like mine are sensitive and need the flexibility to be negotiated. Situations like this can be avoided in the future if more than just income is factored into the child support process so a better judgment can be made before punishment is handed down that is a detriment to all parties involved. Your consideration of these matters and solutions is very much appreciated.

Senate Bill 15 / House Bill 681 starts to fix the issue for lower-income people by allowing an exemption to license suspensions for those making less than \$38,000 annually. This is a good move to prevent catastrophes like what I went through. I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 15 / House Bill 681.

HB 681 - Child Support - Driver's License Suspensi

Uploaded by: Kam Bridges

Position: FAV

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony for House Bill 681

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

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

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 20, 2025

POSITION: Support

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 681, which 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.**

Mobility is key in Maryland's regional economy. The Census Bureau reported that almost [40% of Marylanders travel outside their county for employment](#). This statistic is more pronounced for lower-income communities of color where there is a scarcity of jobs available by public transit. [Only 8.5% of jobs in the Baltimore region can be reached within one hour, one way by public transit](#). Thus, a valid driver's license and a vehicle are overwhelmingly critical for a noncustodial parent to maintain an income that can be used to make child support payments in the first place.

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.

More than 20,000 obligors had their driver's license suspended in FY23, harming them and their families pursuant to existing law. It also harmed their employers, the state's economy, and the state's tax base.

House Bill 681 shifts the onus of burdensome legal processes away from disadvantaged, low income individuals. Current law already allows for individuals in arrears to request an exemption for license suspension if losing their license would be an undue burden. But in practice, most low-income individuals do not request that exemption even when they qualify. They often do not have stable residency, so mailing information to them is ineffective. And even if they do receive the notice, they often do not know how to navigate the process. House Bill 681 eliminates that issue by allowing for the exemption to be automatic; preventing additional unnecessary burdens from continually being placed on disenfranchised Marylanders.

For these reasons, JOTF supports House Bill 681 and urges a favorable report.

For more information, contact:

Kam Bridges / Public Policy Advocate / Kam@jotf.org

Sponsor written testimony

Uploaded by: Karen Toles

Position: FAV

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

Testimony in Support of HB0681_Blaha_SURJ.pdf

Uploaded by: Katherine Blaha

Position: FAV

Tuesday, February 18, 2025



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice, which advocates for the reform of policies and practices that adversely affect incarcerated people's successful reintegration into society. I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am testifying in **support of Child support license suspension (exception (HB0681))**.

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay child support. In effect, they counter-productively create a barrier to employment, make it difficult to be an involved and active parent, and make the parent in arrears less able to make child-support payments.

Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money. When Washington state stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non-moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found that 42 percent of people with a history of driver's license 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 prominent among low-income and younger drivers. This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have the ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support-driver's license suspension (HB0681)**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Katherine Blaha

5706 Cross Country Blvd

Baltimore, MD 21209

Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore

SB0015_HB0681_FAV_KhimauniSelden.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Khimauni Selden

Position: FAV



OUT FOR JUSTICE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary Committees

FROM: Khimauni Selden

My name is Khimauni Selden. I reside in District 42 in Baltimore County and support Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681.

I am a father of two beautiful little girls I love and care for. My eldest daughter's mother placed me on child support when our baby was only a few months old. At the time, I was shocked at the situation – given that I had repeatedly offered to provide for our daughter and assured her mother that all she had to do was ask for what she needed. It became clear that she was unwilling to compromise unless I put cash directly in her hands or that I was on child support.

At my first court hearing, I arbitrarily agreed to pay roughly \$350 a month in child support on the assumption that I would be able to further negotiate in front of the judge. It quickly became apparent that no further discussion was allowed on the matter – no one was willing to hear anything I had to say. Since that initial court decision, my monthly child support allocations have increased to \$511 a month without allowing me to speak on the matter. Specifically, the court has not considered that I am a custodial parent for my youngest daughter and the breadwinner of my household.

Since I was first placed on child support, I have looked far and wide for a well-paying job to support my children and my current household. However, because my license has been suspended, I have been unable to make meaningful changes to my living situation. The only well-paying job I could find—working for Amazon—was outside my neighborhood. However, with a suspended license, I could not work this job and took a lower-paying local job with insufficient hours.

Further, I desire to have a relationship with my eldest daughter, whom, despite all the child support I pay, I am not allowed to see. I was told to go to court and obtain visitation rights—but how? I have no car, a job, or a family to support without the added Uber fees that it would require. Heading to court is a hefty undertaking that, without a license, I frankly cannot do at this time.



While I can acknowledge that some fathers may be unwilling to provide for and support their children, there should be compassionate and appropriate avenues for the fathers who care to be able to speak for themselves and find a middle ground on child support. This situation, and the stagnation caused by my lack of a driving license, has taken a hefty toll on my family's mental health.

Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681 tremendously aids lower-income constituents like myself by allowing exemption license suspensions for those making less than \$38,000 annually. This move would prevent the years of difficulties I experienced. For this reason, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681.

Sincerely,

Khimauni Selden

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: Lindsay Keipper

Position: FAV

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of **District 46**, and I am testifying in **support of Child support license suspension (exception HB0681)**.



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found 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.² This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support- driver's license suspension (HB0681)**.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Keipper

2425 Fleet St., Baltimore

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

² <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/business/research/reports/FHWA-NJ-2007-020-V1.pdf>

SB0015_HB0681_FAV_LH (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Lindsey Hensley

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings and House Judiciary Committees

FROM: **Lindsey Hensley**

My name is Lindsey Hensley, I live in District 41, and I support(s) SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681 to repeal the punitive practice of driver's license suspensions for lower-income obligors.

My brother-in-law is 40 years old, on dialysis, has experienced kidney failure, and is on child support for his five children. Despite that, he stays working three jobs, raises all five of his kids, and catches the bus to get around town despite having had access to a vehicle.

Things have been challenging for him since he and his wife split. She put him on child support for the kids even though they agreed to raise them together—a bargain that he still manages to maintain. She also garnished the maximum amount of money from his accounts, leaving him destitute and working multiple jobs to survive while he still spent equal time raising his kids.

When the garnishments became too much, he switched jobs and tried to get the order modified. This did not work and led to his license being suspended. Since then, he pulled back from trying to secure better jobs and stuck to only what was available in his area by bus, which was a little. He wanted to testify but allowed me to speak because he was still working. He can't secure better employment or participate in his kid's life more productively without access to transit. Because of the suspended license, he takes buses everywhere and can't even take his kids on trips to get groceries or to school.

How is a person supposed to see the child, support the child or go to work under the current system? It doesn't make sense to me, and I think House Bill 681 will at least aid my brother-in-law with all this chaos. I urge a favorable report on SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681.

SB0015_HB0681_FAV_MarkusRobinson.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Marcus Robinson

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and House Judiciary Committee

FROM: **Markus V. Robinson**

I support Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681, which prevents license suspensions for poor obligors.

I have lived in Maryland, specifically Prince George's County, since 2000. I have been a non-custodial parent in the child support enforcement process since approximately 2015. Since then, I have had several experiences with child support determination and subsequent enforcement that do not provide equity or fairness to the non-custodial parent.

Making all the changes needed to achieve parental equity in child support in Maryland is indeed a large and complex task, but one that is not impossible. It reminds me of the old joke, "How do you eat an elephant?" The answer is "one bite at a time." Senate Bill 15/House Bill 681 is one of those bites.

With the strongest urging possible, I say this effort must pass and be enacted by the state legislature. Vehicle transportation is a pillar in the lives of so many parents; to strip it away by suspending the ability to drive back and forth to employment that allows them to comply with court-ordered support without a judicial review of the circumstances is counterproductive to the desired outcome.

Please pass Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681. I urge a favorable report.

HB 681 - Child Support - Driver's License Suspensi

Uploaded by: Mark Woodard

Position: FAV

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony for House Bill 681

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

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

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 20, 2025

POSITION: Support

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 681, which 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.**

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 counterproductive.

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.

More than 20,000 obligors had their driver's license suspended in FY23, harming them and their families pursuant to existing law. It also harmed their employers, the state's economy, and the state's tax base.

The 250% language as a basis for the obligor to object and request an investigation and a hearing as proposed by HB 681 would become just one more factor that in practice does not occur. That is the reason why Senator Watson has brought this legislation forward in the Judicial Proceedings committee for multiple years and the committee has consistently shown that it concurs by passing out this legislation multiple years in a row. JOTF requests that the Judiciary Committee join them this year.

For these reasons, JOTF supports House Bill 681 and urges a favorable report.

For more information, contact:

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

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: Melissa Badeker

Position: FAV

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of District 8. **I am testifying in support of Child support license suspension (exception (HB0681)).**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found 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.² This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support-driver's license suspension (HB0681).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Melissa Badeker
3020 Linwood Avenue, Parkville MD 21234
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

1

□ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

2

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

SB0015_HB0681_FAV_MichaelRoss.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Ross

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681:

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

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

FROM: Michael Ross

DATE: February 20th, 2025

My name is Michael Ross. I am a resident of **District 46** in Baltimore and support(s) SENATE BILL 15 / HOUSE BILL 681 to repeal the punitive practice of driver's license suspensions for lower-income obligors.

In 2009, my daughter was born to me and my then-girlfriend. We stuck it out together to raise our child until 2012, when it was discovered that she had severe mental health issues. Life happens to us all, but where it became painful was that she refused to let me see my daughter even though there was no hearing for custody. She placed me on child support for the sole purpose of securing state assistance which would have been fine if she had informed me of her plan and not led to garnishments in my wages. My license was suspended immediately since I was unaware of the payments, and my wages were garnished. Again, there was no court order or hearing that I was informed of, but before I knew it, I was driving illegally. In 2015, CPS picked up my daughter from her mother, stating that her mental state continued to deteriorate. At this point, I decided enough was enough and fought in court to receive custody of my daughter, which I achieved in October 2015.

I thought that would end the drama, but it did not. My wages continued to be garnished, and my license stayed suspended despite my having full custody of my daughter. My wages and taxes were intercepted through 2019, again, despite having full custody of my daughter. For years, I spoke with the child support administration to sort out my case - showing them that I have full custody of my daughter, but the suspension was never lifted. This put me in danger whenever I stepped outside to take her to the doctor, school, or even to visit her mother since it is illegal to drive on a suspended license.

In 2019, Maryland Legal Aid sorted out my situation and fought the Child Support Administration to lift my license suspension and receive the intercepted taxes. Stacy Bensky of Legal Aid has helped me secure \$4360 in tax intercepts and 4-5 backed child support payments, and we are still fighting for the rest. Child Support has been brutal - but my biggest concern was the loss of my license and wages. I'm currently a facilities manager at a high-rise building in Baltimore, but we travel often. I can't continue to risk losing



access to my license. If I can't drive, then I can't work; if I can't work, NO ONE will take care of my daughter.

SENATE BILL 15 / HOUSE BILL 681 is an excellent move to help guys like me protect our access to employment for what can be a needlessly predatory system. It ends the practice of suspending licenses for child support arrears of those making less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or \$38k annually. No evidence suggests suspending an individual's driver's license improves the collection of arrears for persons at this income level in the long run. I urge a favorable report on SENATE BILL 15 / HOUSE BILL 681 for these reasons and more.

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: Rebecca Shillenn

Position: FAV

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. **I am a resident of District 45. I am testifying in support of Child support license suspension (exception (HB0681)).**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found 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. This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of Child support-driver's license suspension (HB0681).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Shillenn

5401 Elsrode Avenue Baltimore

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

SC FFJC Testimony In Support of MD SB 15_HB681, SB

Uploaded by: Sarah Couture

Position: FAV

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

**MARYLAND SB 15/HB 681 (Driver's Licenses - Suspension for Child Support
Arrearages and Court Orders)**

&

MARYLAND SB 106 / HB 110 (Child Support - Suspension of Driver's Licenses)

TO: Members of the Maryland House Judiciary Committee and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Sarah Couture, Regional Director, Fines and Fees Justice Center

DATE: February 18, 2025

Dear Members of the Maryland House Judiciary Committee and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

We write in support of Senate Bill 15/House Bill 681 and Senate Bill 106 / House Bill 110. These bills would make meaningful reforms to reduce the use of driver's license suspensions as a means of punishment and enforcement for unpaid child support in Maryland. This would protect low-income Marylanders from becoming trapped in a cycle of debt and would also remove counterproductive barriers to employment.

The Fines and Fees Justice Center is a national hub for information, advocacy, and collaboration for the reform of fines and fees, including eliminating the onerous collateral consequences that result from nonpayment of fines and fees debt — like driver's license suspensions. Not having a valid driver's license makes life nearly impossible for most people in Maryland, preventing them from going to work, getting a new job, taking their child to school or childcare, and going to medical appointments. Because most people require a car to access the most basic necessities, they have no choice but to continue driving. When they do, they risk additional fines and fees, as well as arrest and jail time for driving with an invalid license.

To accelerate reform nationwide to end debt-based driver's license suspensions, FFJC along with more than 130 ideologically diverse joined forces in 2019 to launch the Free to Drive Campaign.¹ This national campaign brings together policy advocates, research organizations, and businesses committed to the principle that restrictions on driving privileges should only be used for dangerous driving — not to coerce debt payment or to punish people who miss a court appearance.

The same is true in Maryland as is true across the country: debt-based suspensions harm Black, Brown and low-income communities at disproportionate rates. In Maryland, Black people are

¹ For more information, visit www.freetodrive.org.

nearly five times more likely to have their license suspended than white people.² Moreover, these racial disparities have worsened, rather than improved, over a period of five years analyzed.³

The Maryland legislature has already recognized the significant harms and inequities associated with debt-based suspensions with the passage of SB 234 in 2020, which ended certain suspensions for nonpayment of fines and fees in Maryland. **The same principles, evidence, and values that led the Maryland legislature to end one form of debt-based driver's license suspension with the passage of SB 234 apply in the context of unpaid child support, as well.**

While federal law prevents any state from completely eliminating license suspensions in the child support context, the law is clear that the state may only impose those suspensions in "appropriate cases."⁴ The legislation being considered would limit debt-based suspensions for child support and prevent them from being imposed inappropriately on people whose noncompliance is due to a lack of financial resources, not willfulness. Specifically, SB 15/HB 681 would ensure that people who are low income do not have their licenses suspended for nonpayment of child support by prohibiting the suspension of licenses for those with an income less than 250% of the federal poverty level or \$38,000 annually. SB 106/HB 110 would require a hearing before suspension and prevent suspension in inappropriate circumstances, such as when the person owing child support has a disability or is unable to pay.

Finally, there is no evidence that supports driver's license suspension as an effective method to collect debts, whether that debt is unpaid fines and fees or unpaid child support. In fact, debt-based driver's license restrictions make it more difficult to pay one's fines and fees by reducing access to employment. Studies examining the impact on collection have found no significant difference in collection rates as a result of license suspensions and restrictions. In Texas, one study found that municipal courts that did *not* use driver's license restrictions as a collection tool collected \$45 *more* per case, on average, than courts that did use them.⁵ In another study comparing data from the years Tennessee did suspend licenses for unpaid fines and fees with the years that Tennessee did not do so, researchers found no statistically significant difference in collection rates during the time periods despite the change in practice.⁶

Senate Bill 15/ House Bill 681 and Senate Bill 106 / House Bill 110 would advance fairness and equity, as well as remove barriers to work for people who lack the financial resources to resolve their child support debt. We urge the Committee to support these two important pieces of legislation.

Sarah Couture

Sarah Couture
Regional Director
Fines and Fees Justice Center
scouture@finesandfeesjusticecenter.org

finesandfeesjusticecenter.org | info@ffjc.us | Fines and Fees Justice Center

² Testimony of Univ. of Baltimore School of Law Legal Data and Design Clinic in Support of Maryland HB 580 (2020), *available at* <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1931YyasJqJz1E3L1XUMEALgRfDsPsaGU/view?usp=sharing>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ 42 U.S.C.A. § 666(a)(16).

⁵ Texas Fair Defense Project & Texas Appleseed, *Driven by Debt: The Failure of the OmniBase Program* (Aug. 2021), *available at* <https://www.texasappleseed.org/sites/default/files/OmniBaseRevenueReport-Aug11-Final.pdf>.

⁶ ThinkTennessee, *Reducing the Harms of Court Debt: Driver's License Revocations are an Ineffective Policy for Increasing Court Collections* (Nov. 2022), *available at* <https://www.thinktennessee.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/drivers-license-revocation-report.pdf>.

Written Testimony - HB 681.pdf

Uploaded by: Shanta Trivedi

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681:

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

FROM: **The Sayra & Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts**

Shanta Trivedi serves as the Faculty Director and Aubrey Edwards-Luce is the Executive Director of the Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children, and the Courts (CFCC) at the University of Baltimore School of Law. CFCC envisions communities where children and families thrive without unnecessary involvement in the legal system. We engage communities as we work tirelessly to transform systems that create barriers to family well-being. CFCC supports SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681 to repeal the punitive practice of driver's license suspensions for lower-income obligors.

Mobility is key in Maryland's regional economy. The Census Bureau reported that almost [40% of Marylanders travel outside their county for employment](#). This statistic is more pronounced for lower-income communities of color where there is a scarcity of jobs available by public transit. [Only 8.5% of jobs in the Baltimore region can be reached within one hour, one way by public transit](#). Thus, a valid driver's license and a vehicle are necessary for economic sustainability.

In 2015, NPR reported that 62% of Marylanders who owe child support make less than minimum wage but owe at least \$10,000 in unpaid arrearages. They will never pay this debt, especially when the current law magnifies the issue by crippling their mobility. [Maryland Code Ann., Fam. Law § 10-119](#) states that upon 60 days of nonpayment of child support, an obligor shall have their license or privilege to drive suspended. Beyond this, [Maryland Code Ann., Transportation §16-303](#) states that driving on an invalid license (suspended, canceled, or revoked) in Maryland is a crime punishable by up to (1) one year in jail, a \$1000 fine, or both. As such, child support debt triggers a suspended driver's license, arrest, or hefty fines, further complicating the ability of low-wage workers to secure employment and make payments.

Data suggests that this issue is racialized as well, adversely disrupting the lives of African Americans. Although Blacks people comprise 31.1% of Maryland's population, [MDOT data suggests](#) they made up to 71% of the roughly 27,000 license suspensions between 2015 - 2020. If a disproportionately higher number of black Marylanders lack access to a valid driver's license due to license suspensions and are blocked from participating in a mobile economy, it stands to reason that current state policy is actively preventing them from making payments.

SENATE BILL 15 / HOUSE BILL 681 ends suspending licenses for child support arrears of those making less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or \$38k annually. No evidence suggests suspending an individual's driver's license improves arrears collection for persons at this income level in the long run. Suspending licenses for lower-income obligors contradicts the stated purpose of increasing compliance in child support payments and engagement with family where appropriate. It cripples the primary way the Child Support Enforcement Agency can collect (wage garnishments) by eliminating access to employment needed to pay down arrears. **We urge a favorable report on SENATE BILL 15 / HOUSE BILL 681 for these reasons.**

HB0681 - Child support license suspension- excepti

Uploaded by: Stephanie Dolamore

Position: FAV

February 20, 2025

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 also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. We are residents of District 43A. **We are testifying in support of Child support license suspension (exception (HB0681)).**



Showing Up for Racial Justice

HB0681 bill forbids the suspension of a driver's license for failure to pay child support where the person makes less than 250% of the federal poverty guideline. Driver's license suspensions do not work as an enforcement mechanism for those who are living in poverty and simply do not have the ability to pay. They create a barrier to employment and make it difficult to be an involved and active parent. Further, the punishment can paradoxically make the parent in arrears less able to make further child-support payments. Suspending fewer licenses could even save the state money—when Washington State stopped suspending licenses for failure to pay non moving violations, there were 500 fewer arrests for driving while suspended, which saved an estimated 4,500 hours of patrol officers' time.¹

The current system disproportionately affects low-income parents and families. A New Jersey survey found 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.² This bill could give lower-income noncustodial parents a better chance to get to work and have future ability to pay child support.

It is for these reasons that we encourage you to vote **in support of Child support-driver's license suspension (HB0681).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Matthew & Stephanie Dolamore
3718 Yolando Road, Baltimore, Maryland, 21218
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/15/us/with-drivers-license-suspensions-a-cycle-of-debt.html>

² <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/business/research/reports/FHWA-NJ-2007-020-V1.pdf>

SB0015_HB0681_FAV_TrinaSelden.pdf

Uploaded by: Trina Selden

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 15/ HOUSE BILL 681:

Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders

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

FROM: Trina Selden

DATE: February 20th, 2025

I am Trina Selden, founder and executive director of Out for Justice. Usually, I leave it to my team to testify on legislation impacting our members. Still, I wanted to testify as a mother and grandmother to talk about the impact that the child support system has had on my family.

My son and I have been threatened repeatedly by the mother of his child, who has weaponized the child support system to increase his monthly payments, keep him away from his daughter, and take away his driver's license - which he needs to work. The Child Support Administration has been less than helpful in helping our family increase our visitation rights and protect his ability to work. This bill will at least allow him to have a fair hearing regarding his Driver's License so that he may continue to work and support my granddaughter.

Relationships can be messy and complicated. Most of us have experienced this at some point in our lives. However, losing one's Driver's License, having one's wages garnished, and increased threats of incarceration, which are tools that child support uses, are not effective methods of dealing with breakups or ensuring that children are provided for. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have on the impact this bill or child support enforcement has on families. I urge a favorable report.

HB 681 - LBCMD Priority Bill.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Ufuoma Agarín

Position: FAV



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3185 • 800-492-7122 Ext. 3185 • Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us

February 20, 2025

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Chair Luke Clippinger

Judiciary Committee

100 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers strong favorable support for **House Bill 681 (HB0681) – Child Support – Driver’s License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders**. This bill introduces critical updates to the process for suspending driver’s licenses due to child support arrearages and establishes fairer requirements for enforcement while protecting the rights of low-income individuals. **This bill is on the 2025 legislative priority agenda of the Black Caucus.**

Comparative studies conducted by researchers at Brown University and the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia found that [91% of license suspensions are for non-driving-related events](#). Coupled with the majority of non-driving-related suspensions being most common in low-income communities with a high-proportion of black and minority residents, drivers license suspensions without consideration towards systemic barriers often exacerbates existing systemic challenges such as underemployment and barriers to stable work.

Additionally, current penalties for overdue child support payments do not require the Child Support Administration (CSA) to notify the non-custodial parent before initiating license suspensions which further undermines the economic stability of Black families, compounding cycles of poverty and financial insecurity.

To address these inequities, House Bill 681 first mandates that the CSA notify individuals before initiating license suspensions, including written notices with information on how to appeal or request investigations, safeguarding individuals from being unfairly penalized due to administrative errors or circumstances beyond their control.

House Bill 681 also mandates that the CSA notify individuals before initiating license suspensions, including written notices with information on how to appeal or request investigations, safeguarding individuals from being unfairly penalized due to administrative errors or circumstances beyond their control.

Furthermore, House Bill 681 includes provisions for work-restricted licenses,

increases the threshold for license suspension from 60 to 120 days of noncompliance, and exemptions for individuals with annual incomes at or below 250% of the federal poverty level unless they are found to be voluntarily impoverished.

These stipulations help protect vulnerable families from unnecessary hardships by providing individuals a more reasonable timeframe to fulfill their obligations and allow individuals to maintain employment while addressing their child support obligations.

The bill's emphasis on fairness and transparency in enforcement aligns with the Caucus' commitment to advancing public policies that are just and equitable, particularly for Black and minority communities, historically burdened by discriminatory practices.

House Bill 681 represents a balanced and thoughtful approach to child support enforcement. It prioritizes accountability while protecting vulnerable families, ensuring that enforcement measures are applied equitably and do not exacerbate existing inequalities. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports **House Bill 681** and urges a favorable vote.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland

HB 681 Child Support - Driver's License Suspension

Uploaded by: Catherine OMalley

Position: FWA

BILL NO: House Bill 681
TITLE: Child Support - Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and Court Orders
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
HEARING DATE: February 20, 2025
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

House Bill 681 would disallow the Child Support Agency from suspending a driver's license to enforce court ordered child support if the payor earns less than 250% of the Federal Poverty Level. The Women's Law Center understands that it is sometime counter-intuitive to deprive someone who owes money, in this case arrearages on child support, from the means to get to and from a job. In the appropriate circumstances it may be better to not suspend the license. HB 681 is a reasonable effort to balance the interests, but we have one concern.

The Child Support Agency (Agency) has the most robust ability to enforce a court order to pay child support, but it is limited. Suspension of a driver's license is one of the mechanisms they can use. HB 681 would create an exception to the Agency's enforcement mechanism of suspending an obligor's driver's license, depriving them of the ability to suspend a license of anyone who earns less than 250% of Federal Poverty level. There would be no discretion. We do not have the expertise to opine on whether tying this exception to the federal poverty level is better than tying it to a state barometer of some sort, and leave that to the policy makers. We also wonder how this works as it relates to number of family members. The income number changes depending on that fact.

However, we do have a concern that obligors may impoverish themselves in order to lower their income to whatever level is set for this exception to kick in. We suggest an amendment to provide that an obligor must be determined not to have voluntarily impoverished themselves before the Agency be completely deprived of this enforcement mechanism. We do not want single parents (more often women) of children left without financial resources they are due to help raise the child or children, if the obligor could actually be earning a greater amount of money and paying, but has chosen not to do so.

Therefore, the Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. urges a favorable report on House Bill 681 with amendment.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It operates the statewide Family Law Hotline, serving thousands self-represented litigants a year on that line with information and referral.

HB0681_INFO_DHS.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge Government Affairs

Position: INFO



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

February 20, 2025

The Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building, Room 100
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB0681 - CHILD SUPPORT - DRIVER'S LICENSE SUSPENSION
FOR ARREARAGES AND COURT ORDERS - POSITION: INFORMATIONAL ONLY**

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide a letter of information regarding House Bill 681 (HB 681). The bill would remove parents with lower incomes from early engagement with resources that could help when a parent experiences challenges meeting their child support obligations. After the January 14, 2025 hearing on our Department's bill, SB 195, we met with Senator Watson to discuss the Child Support Driver's License Suspension program.

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS empowers Marylanders to reach their full potential by providing preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities. Our Child Support Administration (CSA) implements the child support program affected by HB 681. This legislation impacts the Driver's License Suspension program, a tool leveraged to increase engagement with non-custodial parents who have arrears and are unable to pay. House Bill 681 would exclude noncustodial parents who fall at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines from referral to the Driver's License Suspension (DLS) program.

We agree that parents unable to pay child support because of low income should be excluded from the DLS program. We believe the intention to exclude parents unable to pay is best served by our Department's bill, [House Bill 218](#) (HB 218). HB 218 would

exclude parents CSA knows are unable to pay from referral to Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration for the purpose of suspending a driver's license.

When parents are out of compliance with a child support order and engage with CSA, they have opportunities to explain their circumstances, correct out-dated information, and right-size their child support orders. HB 681 would exclude parents CSA knows are unable to pay from otherwise statutorily required engagement when a parent is in arrears. Our bill would continue to include parents with low incomes in statutorily required outreach to engage with CSA while exempting the parents from the DLS program. Moreover, HB 218 would create more opportunities for CSA to determine when a parent meets the requirements for exclusion from the DLS program by engaging the parent to update information only the parent has, like the size of their household and whether a multi-family adjustment applies. HB 218's emphasis on engagement with parents is an example of the Family Matters approach we are taking across our department and with our sister agencies.

We agree it is critical to distinguish between parents who cannot pay child support and parents who will not pay. We agree that parents experiencing poverty should not be penalized by a driver's license suspension. However, we don't want to continue with out-dated information or leave parents without support when they are unable to pay. Noncustodial parents can fall further into arrears without regular engagement with CSA which updates our information, and facilitates access to employment programs, supportive services, and the child support Payment Incentive Program.

Child support orders include the requirement that parents proactively inform the Child Support Administration of a substantial change in income. When parents provide updated income and household information we are able to determine whether they meet the threshold of at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Federal poverty guidelines are determined by a combination of income and household size. Even if CSA verifies income with sister agencies, the only way to determine household size is through engagement with the parent. HB 681 would require CSA to determine whether a parent is exempt from the Driver's License Suspension program based on income information alone. That is not possible unless CSA proactively reaches out to every parent in arrears whose known income appears to be at or below 250% of poverty to inquire about household size. CSA estimates it would need an additional 29 caseworkers to confirm and process whether a noncustodial parent in arrears meets federal income and household size thresholds.

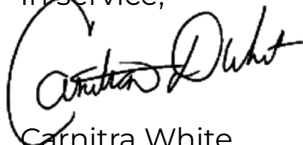
The Department supports the policy objective of HB 681 and is committed to distinguishing between parents who are unable to pay and parents who are unwilling to pay a child support obligation when implementing non-payment disincentives like the Driver's License Suspension program. Both HB 681 and HB 218 make the

appropriate distinction. When combined with our commitment to implementing administrative and information system changes, HB 218 ensures that our mutual policy objectives will be effectuated faster.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer informational testimony to the Committee as you consider how best to modernize child support in Maryland. Our bill, HB 218, requires more equitable implementation of the Driver's License Suspension program, encourages parental engagement so CSA information is up to date, and maintains parental opportunities for receiving help. When child support orders are equitable and parents have help when they need it, parents can avoid arrearages and collection actions while improving payment consistency and reliability.

We believe our Departmental bill, HB 218, would effectuate our shared policy objectives, ensure we remain compliant with federal statutory and regulatory requirements, and better serve Maryland's children, parents, and families. If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carnitra White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Carnitra White
Principal Deputy Secretary

hb681.pdf

Uploaded by: Will Vormelker

Position: INFO

HON. STACY A. MAYER
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE
BALTIMORE COUNTY
CHAIR

HON. RICHARD SANDY
CIRCUIT COURT
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MARYLAND JUDICIAL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: House Bill 681
Child Support – Driver's License Suspension for Arrearages and
Court Orders
DATE: January 25, 2025
(2/20)

INFORMATIONAL COMMENT PAPER

The Judiciary respects the separation of powers doctrine and acknowledges that the legislature is the policy-making branch. As such, the Judiciary has no position on the policy aims of this legislation and defers to the legislative branch on such matters.

The Judiciary writes only to provide information, if useful for the Committee's consideration. A significant number of individuals at risk of losing their license for nonpayment of child support are people who need that license in order to work the job that will permit payment of that child support order. Extending the time of nonpayment for a noncommercial license to be the same as the time for nonpayment of a commercial license provides these individuals with additional time to attempt a resolution with the Child Support Administration before their license can be suspended.

Adding an income-based exception to the conditions for license suspension further limits the number of low-income individuals who might lose their livelihood and ability to pay the support order if their license is suspended.

cc. Hon. Karen Toles
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor