



OUT FOR JUSTICE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 347/HOUSE BILL 142:

Child Support - Suspension of Driver's Licenses

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

FROM: Dwan Burton, Deputy Director of Out For Justice

DATE: February 10, 2026

My name is Dwan Burton, and I am the Deputy Director of Out for Justice, Inc. (OFJ), a Baltimore-based grassroots organization led by people directly impacted by the criminal legal system. We first thank the committee for passing House Bill 681 last year, which created an exception to the license suspension statute for lower-income parents, many of whom are in our member base. We strongly support Senate Bill 347, which clarifies when it is appropriate to suspend a driver's license for child support arrearages, ensuring this enforcement tool is used appropriately.

As stated, Out for Justice has a large membership base of individuals who have returned home from incarceration and have struggled with child support arrears, leading to garnishments and license suspensions. When we've worked with the Child Support Administration on behalf of our members, we were met with stiff opposition, long wait times, and agents who were apathetic to the struggles of non-custodial parents. What was worse was the indiscriminate license suspensions of some of our members who were disabled or actually had custody of the child.

Despite having custody of his other kids, my son's father routinely faced license suspension and subsequently failed to comply with his court order as he had no method of transportation to get to work, pick up his children, and check in with the administration. Thus, I was left transporting the kids back and forth to school, daycare, and soccer practice, while driving him and myself to work (and back), which was a massive disruption to our daily routines. The suspension tool is designed to prevent those with the money to pay but who actively choose voluntary impoverishment from the privilege of driving. Thanks to the automated system, however, suspensions are routine and random, without factoring in the driver's circumstances, ability to pay, or even whether they are complying with a court or administrative order.

Senate Bill 347 defines when it is appropriate to suspend a license and outlines numerous factors that make it inappropriate. This should provide the administration with guidance on using their tool effectively to benefit the family. For these reasons, I urge a favorable report.