



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 319

Child Support - Assignment of Rights

TO: Hon. Will Smith, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Zachary Alberts, Director of Advocacy

The Center for Urban Families (CFUF), a West Baltimore workforce and family-strengthening community-based organization, advocates for legislation that strengthens urban communities by helping fathers and families achieve stability and economic success.

We are here to strongly voice our support for Senate Bill 319, which would significantly curtail the practice of assigning child support orders to the parents of children who have been removed into foster care.

In July 2022, the Federal Administration for Children and Families recommended that state child welfare agencies cancel policies “where the default position is to refer parents to the child support agency” for foster care cost-recovery. Research has shown that for every \$100 in child support for these families, reunification is delayed by a year. This practice is bad for families, bad for children, and bad for the state.

Based on administrative data in 2023, we believe the state spent about \$660,000 to collect \$440,000, for a net loss of \$220,000. In other words, the state is losing money each time it attempts to carry out this harmful practice.

We have heard from the Department of Human Services that they are already working on COMAR regulations to effect the changes this bill intends, and would like to commend them for doing so. However, we believe it is imperative that these are changes so important for low-income Marylanders that they are made permanent through law.

I urge the Committee to give Senate Bill 319 a favorable report.

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