



HB 142 - Child Support - Earnings Withholdings Limits
House Judiciary Committee
February 5, 2026
SUPPORT

Chair Bartlett, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 142. This bill will help improve child support compliance by reflecting a low-income parent's actual ability to pay. By aligning child support policy with non-custodial parents' real financial capacity, this legislation helps reduce uncollectible arrears, improves long-term compliance, and strengthens family stability.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

Research from the University of Maryland School of Social Work, [Who Pays Child Support? Noncustodial Parents' Payment Compliance](#), shows the critical point that most noncustodial parents want to support their children and do pay when they are financially able. In fact, most parents studied paid at least some child support in a given year. However, compliance decreases sharply when support orders require a share of income that is difficult for the non-custodial parent to pay. The research finds that:

- Parents with stable employment and realistic orders are far more likely to pay consistently.
- Parents whose orders exceeded 20–30% of actual earnings were significantly less likely to comply with their orders.
- Noncustodial parents who paid all their current support typically owed about 18–20% of their income, while those who paid little or nothing were often expected to pay more than half of what they earned.
- Excessive enforcement mechanisms, such as license suspensions or rigid penalties, sever access to work, making payment even less likely.

CASH supports HB 142 because it reflects a shift toward evidence-based child support policy. It recognizes that:

- Economic stability is essential to child support compliance.
- Enforcement strategies should encourage payment, not create barriers to employment.
- Policies that right-size obligations and provide reasonable protections for low-income parents ultimately benefit children by increasing consistent support.

When child support systems are fair, realistic, and accommodate the ability to pay, families are better served. This bill continues Maryland's progress toward a child support framework that prioritizes children's well-being by supporting the non-custodial parents' capacity to contribute.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 142.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope