

# HOUSE BILL 435

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CF 4lr0130

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By: **Chair, Judiciary Committee (By Request – Departmental – Human Services)**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2024

Assigned to: Judiciary

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Committee Report: Favorable

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 2, 2024

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Child Support – Incarcerated Obligor**

3 FOR the purpose of altering provisions relating to the calculation and modification of child  
4 support for incarcerated obligors; and generally relating to child support.

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
6 Article – Family Law  
7 Section 12–104, 12–104.1, and 12–204(b)  
8 Annotated Code of Maryland  
9 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

10 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
11 Article – Family Law  
12 Section 12–201(a), (m), and (q) and 12–204(a)  
13 Annotated Code of Maryland  
14 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Family Law**

18 12–104.

19 (a) The court may modify a child support award subsequent to the filing of a

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 motion for modification and upon a showing of a material change of circumstance.

2 (b) The court may not retroactively modify a child support award prior to the date  
3 of the filing of the motion for modification.

4 **(C) IF A PARTY BECOMES INCARCERATED, THE COURT MAY DETERMINE**  
5 **THAT A MATERIAL CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCE WARRANTING A MODIFICATION OF**  
6 **CHILD SUPPORT HAS OCCURRED, PROVIDED THAT THE PARTY'S ABILITY TO PAY**  
7 **CHILD SUPPORT IS SUFFICIENTLY REDUCED DUE TO INCARCERATION.**

8 12-104.1.

9 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

10 (2) "Administration" has the meaning stated in § 10-101 of this article.

11 (3) "Obligee" has the meaning stated in § 10-101 of this article.

12 (4) "Obligor" has the meaning stated in § 10-101 of this article.

13 (b) A child support payment is not past due and arrearages may not accrue during  
14 any period when the obligor is incarcerated, and continuing for 60 days after the obligor's  
15 release from confinement, if[:

16 (1) the obligor was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 180 consecutive  
17 calendar days or more;

18 (2)] the obligor is not on work release and has insufficient resources with  
19 which to make payment[; and

20 (3) the obligor did not commit the crime with the intent of being  
21 incarcerated or otherwise becoming impoverished].

22 (c) (1) In any case in which the Administration is providing child support  
23 services under Title IV, Part D of the Social Security Act, the Administration may, without  
24 the necessity of any motion being filed with the court, adjust an incarcerated obligor's  
25 payment account to reflect the suspension of the accrual of arrearages under subsection (b)  
26 of this section.

27 (2) Before making an adjustment under paragraph (1) of this subsection,  
28 the Administration shall send written notice of the proposed action to the obligee, including  
29 the obligee's right to object to the proposed action and an explanation of the procedures for  
30 filing an objection.

31 12-201.

1 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

2 (m) "Potential income" means income attributed to a parent determined by:

3 (1) the parent's employment potential and probable earnings level based  
4 on, but not limited to:

5 (i) the parent's:

6 1. age;

7 2. physical and behavioral condition;

8 3. educational attainment;

9 4. special training or skills;

10 5. literacy;

11 6. residence;

12 7. occupational qualifications and job skills;

13 8. employment and earnings history;

14 9. record of efforts to obtain and retain employment; and

15 10. criminal record and other employment barriers; and

16 (ii) employment opportunities in the community where the parent  
17 lives, including:

18 1. the status of the job market;

19 2. prevailing earnings levels; and

20 3. the availability of employers willing to hire the parent;

21 (2) the parent's assets;

22 (3) the parent's actual income from all sources; and

23 (4) any other factor bearing on the parent's ability to obtain funds for child  
24 support.

25 (q) "Voluntarily impoverished" means that a parent has made the free and  
26 conscious choice, not compelled by factors beyond the parent's control, to render the parent

1 without adequate resources.

2 12-204.

3 (a) (1) The basic child support obligation shall be determined in accordance  
4 with the schedule of basic child support obligations in subsection (e) of this section. The  
5 basic child support obligation shall be divided between the parents in proportion to their  
6 adjusted actual incomes.

7 (2) (i) If one or both parents have made a request for alimony or  
8 maintenance in the proceeding in which a child support award is sought, the court shall  
9 decide the issue and amount of alimony or maintenance before determining the child  
10 support obligation under these guidelines.

11 (ii) If the court awards alimony or maintenance, the amount of  
12 alimony or maintenance awarded shall be considered actual income for the recipient of the  
13 alimony or maintenance and shall be subtracted from the income of the payor of the alimony  
14 or maintenance under § 12-201(c)(2) of this subtitle before the court determines the amount  
15 of a child support award.

16 (b) (1) **(I)** Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, if a parent  
17 is voluntarily impoverished, child support may be calculated based on a determination of  
18 potential income.

19 **(II) A PARENT WHO IS INCARCERATED MAY NOT BE**  
20 **CONSIDERED TO BE VOLUNTARILY IMPOVERISHED.**

21 (2) If there is a dispute as to whether a parent is voluntarily impoverished,  
22 the court shall:

23 (i) make a finding as to whether, based on the totality of the  
24 circumstances, the parent is voluntarily impoverished; and

25 (ii) if the court finds that the parent is voluntarily impoverished,  
26 consider the factors specified in § 12-201(m) of this subtitle in determining the amount of  
27 potential income that should be imputed to the parent.

28 (3) A determination of potential income may not be made for a parent who  
29 **IS:**

30 (i) **[is]** unable to work because of a physical or mental disability;  
31 **[or]**

32 (ii) **[is]** caring for a child under the age of 2 years for whom the  
33 parents are jointly and severally responsible; **OR**

1 (III) INCARCERATED.

2 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
3 October 1, 2024.

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.