

HB0655, Driving Without Required Security - Repeal of Incarceration Penalties
Testimony in **Support**

To: Chair Clippinger and members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Arielle Juberg

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) in Baltimore. SURJ is working in collaboration with Out for Justice and the Job Opportunities Task Force. I am testifying in **support** of HB0655, Driving without Required Security - Repeal of Incarceration Penalties.

This bill would eliminate incarceration as a penalty of driving uninsured or on a license suspended for child support. HB0655 is important to me because I believe our current policies lead to unnecessary incarceration and higher incarceration expenses, all without making our communities safer.

Currently, driving uninsured or without a valid license in our state is an incarcerable offense of up to one year in jail, a \$1,000 fine, or both for the first offense. Yet over 500,000 Marylanders drive uninsured, citing the cost of auto insurance as the primary factor. Clearly, the threat of incarceration is not working. Within the last five years, there were also over 26,000 Marylanders driving on a license suspended for child support, many of whom did so to maintain employment and familial relationships.

As a Maryland driver, I want my fellow drivers to carry insurance. I would be frustrated and upset if I got into an accident with a driver without insurance. Similarly, I want every child in Maryland to have adequate financial support from their parents. However, our current policies are not working. According to a report by the [Brennan Center](#), “(t)he Supreme Court has held that “punishing a person for his poverty” is unconstitutional....Jailing people for nonpayment is by far the most expensive method of enforcing collections and generates little to no revenue making it highly uneconomical.” Furthermore, our current policy is a cruel way of punishing people for their limited means. As Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh said: “We should not penalize Marylanders for being poor – limiting their ability to get to work, to doctor’s appointments, or to pick children up from school.”

I hope the General Assembly will continue the good work begun in 2020, when the practice of suspending driver’s licenses for unpaid traffic fines and feeds was repealed. HB0655 presents the next logical step in reducing this vicious cycle of poverty and incarceration.

It is for these reasons I am strongly encouraging you to vote **in support** of HB0655. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.

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