



**HB 326**  
**Driver's Licenses – Suspension for Child Support Arrearages - Exception**  
House Judiciary Committee  
February 9, 2023  
**Support**

**Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports HB 326**, which prohibits the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) from suspending a non-custodial parent's driver's license for child support arrearages if they live at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Line.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors. As the largest human service provider in Maryland working with tens of thousands of youth and families each year, we recognize the important role child support plays in lifting children out of poverty. At the same time, we also recognize the personal and financial damage child support arrears can cause for low-income obligors, especially if they are at jeopardy of losing their licenses. .

**Suspending driver's licenses of low-income obligors exacerbates their struggle to obtain a steady income and support their family.** Currently, Maryland law revokes or suspends the license of child support obligors who are 60 days out of compliance for a non-commercial license and 120 days for a commercial license. This law creates an immediate obstacle for low-wage workers who struggle to comply with their child support orders. Suspension of a noncustodial parent's license sets up a vicious cycle, often making it harder for the parent to make their child support payments than before they lost their license, as lack of reliable transportation is a significant barrier to obtaining and maintaining employment.<sup>1</sup> Although Maryland law does provide an opportunity for the noncustodial parent to request a pre-suspension investigation on the grounds that they have a hardship, the burden is on the noncustodial parent to prove they deserve to keep their license due to hardship, and they often have difficulty qualifying.

**Removing the current enforcement policies for driver license suspensions for child support arrearages is better for children, and better for our communities.** When parents are able to maintain employment – and have options to seek out higher wage jobs – children are more likely to receive support payments. In addition, by maintaining transportation, noncustodial parents can build meaningful parent-child relationships and uphold their familial responsibilities. By eliminating barriers to transportation and employment, HB 326 will create economic stability not only for low-income Marylanders struggling to make child support payments, but also for their families

**For the reasons listed above, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 326.**

Submitted By: Lisa Klingenmaier, Assistant Director of Advocacy

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<sup>1</sup> Abell Foundation. 2019. *Reforming Child Support to Improve Outcomes for Children and families*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED596117.pdf>  
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