

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 1011

Family Law – Child Support – Multifamily Adjustment

TO: Hon. Will Smith, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 29, 2024

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports Senate Bill 1011, which would take into account the financial support an obligor is providing to additional children when calculating adjusted actual income for child support.**

Child support enforcement that strikes a balance of providing for the needs of the child without incapacitating the obligor's ability to either work and/or provide the mandated financial support is notoriously difficult to balance. However, this piece of legislation does an admirable job in taking an important step in the right direction. Senate Bill 1011 takes the crucial step of considering mitigating custodial factors when calculating adjusted actual income for child support, namely if the parent in question has additional children whom they owe a legal duty of support and spend more than a fourth of the year overnight in the parent's home. It also allows the court to decline if in the best interests of the child, awarding an allowance would be unjust or inappropriate.

The number one consideration in any and all child support orders should be the best interests of the child or children in question. In most cases, the impoverishment of one of the child's parents would not be in the child's best interests. Financial insecurity is the primary gateway of most of Maryland's largest systemic social ills, including but not limited to homelessness, drug abuse, health issues, and crime. It behooves the state to ensure that the most equitable formulas for child support calculations are used, both for the benefit of the child in question and for the health and wellness of the community as a whole. Taking into account other children a parent might be responsible for while calculating child support payments is a common sense step that Maryland should absolutely consider.

For these reasons, JOTF supports Senate Bill 1011 and urges a favorable report.

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