



State Representative Latyna M. Humphrey (OH-02)

Joint Sponsor Testimony

April 10th, 2024

Good afternoon Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and all other members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I am here today to talk about HB 29, regarding driver's license suspensions and failure to pay child support. I am proud to sponsor this bill along with my colleague, Rep. Darnell Brewer.

Many children and families in our state rely on child support payments made by non-custodial parents. The current law allows driver's licenses to be suspended as a tool that agencies can use in order to force child support obligors to pay what they owe. However, like many well intentioned policies, it actually has the opposite effect to the one intended. Suspending a driver's license can make it much more difficult for someone who owes child support to meet their obligations. In our car dependent society, it is very difficult to get to work or important appointments without a car. Many people need to drive as part of their jobs.

Current law allows child support enforcement agencies to send a notice to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to suspend a driver's license of a person who has failed to pay at least 50% of their total monthly support obligations for a period of 90 consecutive days. This bill would make two key changes to current law. The first is that it would allow a person in default of child support obligations to give evidence to the child support agency to show that license suspension would prevent them from paying what they owe. The agency can then consider that evidence and decide whether or not to request the BMV suspend the license. The second change would allow a person in default to petition the court for limited driving privileges at any time, instead of current law which only allows that during a contempt proceeding. The court can grant limited driving privileges for the

purpose of work, court ordered treatment, transportation of their child to child care, or any other purpose the court deems necessary.

Please Note: The bill retains current law that requires the court to request that the child support enforcement agency advise the court of the agency's position regarding the request for limited driving privileges. The court **must** consider that opinion when making a decision regarding the request for limited driving privileges. Additionally, the bill requires the court to include in its order granting the limited driving privileges any conditions with which the person must comply in order to retain the privileges.

We believe this bill provides flexibility and allows for more ways to let those behind on child support payments keep some driving privileges. This bill is NOT a slap on the wrist for folks who are behind on child support obligations. Rather, the bill can be used as a tool to make it a bit easier, not harder, for those who owe child support to gain and maintain employment so that they can make their child support payments.

On December 5th, 2023 we voted this bill out of the Ohio House of Representatives Unanimously and garnered a lot of bipartisan support—I respectfully ask that you vote yes on HB 29.