

Hessie L. Harris

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB-85
(CREATION OF GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS)**

My testimony is in opposition to SB-85. First, what will be the cost of these services which the taxpayers will pay for but not be able to avail themselves of? Also would not such office attract other non-citizens to the state which would naturally increase the cost?

Second, is not this bill a duplicative effort? The services listed are already being provided to non-citizens. In Montgomery County, many of them are filtered through CASA of Maryland and non-profits but financed by the County.

Not only are non-citizens assisted in "matters related to immigration", Montgomery County provides funds for attorneys to handle deportation cases. That is a service not provided for taxpayers in civil cases which a deportation case is.

Third, Section 9-3033 of the bill provides employment information and referrals to non-citizens which puts them in direct competition with tax paying citizens for resources and jobs. In the existing economic situation in this state and nationally, it is highly inequitable to ask taxpayers to pay for employment services they cannot use.

Fourth, there is concern about the involvement the proposed office has with the police. The language is far too expansive and requires specificity to make sure the neither the office staff nor the non-citizen gets the impression the office has been deputized by the Police.

Finally, there is the language regarding enhancing civic engagement by the non-citizen. It should be made clear that the non-citizen does not have the right to run for office or vote.

