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### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 963**

#### Registers of Wills – Appointment of Personal Representatives *Before the Judiciary Committee: February 25, 2026*

We write in support of HB 963 on behalf of the Chacón Center for Immigrant Justice at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law. The Center is dedicated to creating a future where all Maryland families and residents are stable and secure regardless of immigration status, race, or economics, and where skin color and place of birth do not limit opportunities to build a good life and participate fully in our communities.

More than one million Marylanders are immigrants, representing 17% of the state’s total population.<sup>1</sup> About half are naturalized U.S. citizens. Of the other half, some are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) or green card holders, while many others hold other lawful immigration statuses. These other immigration statuses can last for many years, even decades. The bottom line is that these long-term Marylanders are important members of our communities and should not be disqualified from serving as Personal Representatives simply because they are not citizens or LPRs. Immigration status has no relevance to a person’s qualification as a Personal Representative and should be removed as a potential disqualification.

For example, Marylanders who came to the U.S. as refugees or were granted asylum protection can remain in the U.S. indefinitely. While some asylees and refugees eventually become permanent residents, others do not. Because their status as asylees and refugees permits them to remain in the United States indefinitely, they can remain in Maryland permanently without acquiring a green card.

There are various other immigration statuses that can be extended over very long periods of time. Programs like Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which is designated by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, offer the ability to remain in the United States for as long as such designations are in effect. In the case of El Salvador, an active TPS designation has been in effect since 2001. TPS designations for Nicaragua and Honduras that were terminated in late 2025 had been in effect since 1998.<sup>2</sup> Despite being nominally “temporary,” such statuses

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<sup>1</sup> American Immigration Council, “Immigrants in Maryland,” (data from 2023), <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/maryland/> (Accessed February 23, 2026).

<sup>2</sup> The Forum. “Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Fact Sheet,” [https://forumtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Temporary-Protected-Status-Fact-Sheet-February-2026\\_2.pdf](https://forumtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Temporary-Protected-Status-Fact-Sheet-February-2026_2.pdf) (February 17, 2026).

have enabled TPS holders to build lives in Maryland, purchase homes and other property, and marry and raise a generation of children.

Additionally, many artists, musicians, athletes, and entrepreneurs in O-1 status, as an example, can extend their time in the U.S. indefinitely. Many H-1B specialty occupation workers, including doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, scientific researchers, and graduates of Maryland colleges and universities, remain in that status for many years. Due to backlogs for employment-based green cards for certain countries, some H-1B workers must wait years, even decades, to adjust to permanent residency. In the meantime, these professionals are permitted to remain in the United States, becoming over time integral parts of our communities.

Many individuals who are not permanent residents still reside long-term in Maryland. They set down roots and build lives in our communities. There are a variety of other immigration statuses these Marylanders hold. Furthermore, even if someone does not currently hold a valid immigration status, that is irrelevant to their ability to serve as a Personal Representative for an estate. What matters is that a Personal Representative is invested in the wellbeing of the family whose decedent's estate they are managing. The other disqualifiers already built into the statute will exclude those who should not serve as Personal Representatives.

We agree wholeheartedly with the testimony offered by the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS). For the reasons detailed in the MVLS testimony, limiting the ability to serve as a Personal Representative for an estate to individuals with Lawful Permanent Resident status unfairly and needlessly disadvantages the many Marylanders who hold an indefinite immigration status other than Lawful Permanent Residency and will deprive their families of vital resources by further complicating the estate process.

### **Conclusion**

Many Marylanders hold immigration statuses that offer the ability to remain in the United States for many years, even indefinitely. Someone's immigration status is irrelevant to their fitness to serve as a Personal Representative. Limiting the ability to serve as a Personal Representative for an estate to individuals with Lawful Permanent Resident status needlessly disadvantages the many Marylanders who hold an indefinite immigration status other than Lawful Permanent Residency.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on House Bill 963.

*This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Chacón Center for Immigrant Justice at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law and not by the School of Law; the University of Maryland, Baltimore; or the University of Maryland System.*