



**Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee
February 27, 2020**

SB 742 – Labor and Employment – Fair Recruitment and Transparency Act

FAVORABLE

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The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 742, which would help protect internationally recruited workers in Maryland from labor exploitation and trafficking.

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Specifically, this bill would:

- Protect foreign migrant workers from against discrimination, fraud, unsafe working conditions, and retaliation;
- Ensure that foreign migrant workers receive a contract on the job, and void any agreement by a foreign migrant worker to waive or modify any of their legal rights;
- Require individuals performing foreign labor contracting services to be licensed by the Commissioner of Labor and Industry; and
- Establish a Workgroup to Study the International Exchange Visitor Workers in Maryland.

Maryland benefits from the tens of thousands of workers each year who come to our state on temporary work visas, uplift our economy, and and become an integral part of our community. However, migrant communities in Maryland are among the most susceptible to having their civil rights violated by their employers.

Recruiters and employers discriminate in hiring, mislead workers about the terms of employment, and charge recruitment fees that force people to take out overbearing loans for the chance to work in the United States. This leaves workers indebted on the job, more vulnerable to abuse, and more fearful of reporting crimes against them.

SB 742 is an important step toward ensuring that workers understand their rights and are protected from trafficking, exploitation, and abuse, which will make Maryland a safer place to work and live.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB 742.