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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB901

State and Local Government- Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Dr. Kate Sugarman

My name is Dr. Kate Sugarman, MD and I live in Potomac. I am a member of Jews United for Justice and Beth Sholom Synagogue, and a faculty member at Georgetown Law School. I am testifying in support of SB901. I am a family physician at Unity Health Care, where I treat a large number of immigrant patients who live in Montgomery and Prince George's County. I also specialize in human rights medicine which means I document scars and other signs of torture for asylum seekers as evidence of their being tortured in their country of origin.

From my experience in treating many thousands of immigrant patients I know how critical it is for the Maryland General Assembly to pass SB901. It is vital that my patients and all immigrants feel safe to seek out health care, educational services, police protection and more. None of my patients, nor their friends or family members, should have to fear deportation or family separation simply because they are immigrants.

All primary care doctors know that prevention and early detection in health care are crucially important. We always encourage our patients to come in for vaccines, blood pressure checks, cancer screenings, etc. so that we can see them before they become ill from preventable illnesses. When patients fear that coming to the doctor means that they risk deportations, then they risk getting sick or dying from what would have been treatable had they come sooner.

It is well known how detrimental it is for families when a beloved family member is deported. As a family doctor, it is my job to promote the health of families. That means my goal is to keep families together. Children can not focus in school if they fear the deportation of a parent or loved one, and their performance and their health suffer.

I strongly urge you to support SB901.