



Indivisible: Central Maryland

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HB0403 – Indivisible Central Maryland_Enagonio Liz_SUPPORT

Indivisible Central Maryland SUPPORTS HB0403. As an organization supportive of legislation that protects and enhances the lives of our fellow Marylanders, we work to ensure justice and equality for all, especially those who have not traditionally benefitted from equal treatment. Our core mission includes advocating for fair immigration policy.

Indivisible Central Maryland works in partnership with organizations such as Immigrant Families together, CAIR, and Esperanza Center to assist legally admitted asylum seekers who are awaiting their court hearings. In this capacity, we provide rides to attorney appointments and ICE check-ins. We assist our families with obtaining medical, dental and prenatal care, and help families register their children for school. In this role, we see the fear that paralyzes our families. Many refuse to seek medical care because they are afraid of being deported. For example, a young child in one of our families was gravely ill. The family refused to seek medical treatment out of fear of being rounded up and deported, EVEN THOUGH they are legally admitted and awaiting a court hearing. Eventually the child became so ill that they took him to the emergency room, where they racked up an unpayable bill of several thousand dollars. Many of our families include school age children. Some parents will not participate in parent activities offered by the schools because they are afraid to go into the community and risk being rounded up and deported. Again, these individuals are legally admitted, seeking and/or awaiting asylum hearings. Most egregious of all, the families we serve are aware of immigrants who have been detained and deported when they attend their required court hearings. Our families are law-abiding families, without criminal histories in their countries of origin or here in the US. They want to follow the laws to obtain asylum legally, to be able to work legally, to obtain medical and dental care for themselves and their children. They want their children to attend school, learn well, including learning English, in order to become productive American residents and even citizens. As evidenced by what we see with the families we assist, constant tracking and enforcement in public places deters immigrants from accessing life-saving and necessary services. It instills fear in the parents and their children. In the end, this costs us more than letting a sick child go to a hospital without the parents' fear of harassment and deportation.

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