



**TESTIMONY FOR HB0015  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Peña-Melnyk

**Committee:** Appropriations

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0015 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members fully support our immigrant neighbors and believe that the creation of this position will allow for better coordination of services for immigrants. It will make the experience of settling in to our state easier by creating opportunity centers in local neighborhoods to connect them to ESOL classes, help get their children signed up for school, connect them with business opportunities, assist with the naturalization and DACA process as well as handling their questions and concerns. It will also offer a centralized place to deal with crimes against immigrants.

Maryland has always been a welcoming place for immigrants. As we, ourselves are immigrants, we see them as necessary additions to our communities and we believe the creation of this position as a great step at integrating them and helping them get on their feet faster.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.