



HOWARD COUNTY COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice
in support of SB 317 for Universal Representation.

The Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice is a group of immigrants, concerned organizations, and individuals working to support and protect our foreign-born friends and neighbors. We believe all residents of Howard County (and Maryland) deserve respect, justice, safety, and opportunities to thrive and prosper. In the past months, we have successfully lobbied our local government to pass a bill called the “Liberty Act” to benefit immigrants in Howard County.

We support SB 317 for those who are in I.C.E. detention or in deportation proceedings. **Universal representation stands for the principle that ALL PEOPLE regardless of their income, background, merit of case are entitled to due process under the law.** Without a lawyer, multiple studies show that “due process” is unlikely to happen. Legal representation makes the difference between winning and losing in immigration court.

This is the time to do the right thing and provide legal representation to all Marylanders. Our immigrant neighbors have suffered so much over the past four years and have been deeply impacted both by the policies of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement and by the Pandemic.

We look forward to successfully passing SB 317 for Universal Representation in this legislative session. Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,
Bette Hoover for the Coalition
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