



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0317
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL – RIGHT TO COUNSEL IN IMMIGRATION
PROCEEDINGS COORDINATOR**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hettleman

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0317 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 are very much in support of this much-needed support of the immigrant community in our state. We all know that our immigration system is broken. It can take years to become a citizen. In the meantime, most immigrants settle down and pay taxes and live their lives in the same way as citizens. However, the Department of Homeland Security seems overly enthusiastic in trying to remove immigrants from the state.

Many immigrants, when subject to deportation, do not have the funds to retain legal representation. Data shows that, without representation, the likelihood of deportation is very high. This needs to change. Our members believe that the state should support its residents and provide legal representation.

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