



January 25, 2021

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT of Senate Bill SB317

(Office of the Attorney General - Right to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Coordinator)

Dear Committee Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

We of the Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity (BARS) are writing to you in support of Senate Bill 317 to push forward universal representation for immigrants throughout the state of Maryland.

Formed in response to police brutality against Michael Brown and Freddie Gray in the winter of 2015, BARS brings together Asians and Pacific Islanders of all backgrounds in Baltimore to work in solidarity with our neighbors and the communities we share: Black, Indigenous, POC, LGBTQIA+, women, working class, disabled folks, incarcerated people, immigrants and refugees. We represent a justice-oriented Asian and Pacific Islander group in Baltimore, Maryland, including students, advocates, academics, workers, creatives, and more. Many of our members are first-generation immigrants, having moved to the U.S. from another country, are the children of immigrant parents, or have family members and close friends who have immigrated to the U.S. and call Maryland home.

We urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass SB317 and ensure that all immigrants have fair and due process in immigration court proceedings. We recognize and reiterate the tenets of the call that CASA de Maryland has put out in support of this bill and many others with how important it is to provide support to immigrants in a holistic manner, including stipends, legal counsel to the full length of court proceedings, and community outreach. These actions will ensure Maryland continues to be a welcoming state that values the contributions and lives of immigrants and refugees.

For more information about Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity or this position, please contact baltimoreasianresistanceinsolidarity@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity (BARS)