

The Honorable William C. Smith, Chair
and Members of the Senate Judicial Committee
Maryland Senate
Annapolis, MD

RE: SB 129- Immigration- Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program- UNFAVORABLE

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

SB 129 creates increased tension between American citizens and illegal immigrants. Illegal aliens should not be provided taxpayer funded legal representation. Providing taxpayer-funded legal representation has the following drawbacks:

- It is unfair because it is unavailable to legal aliens and citizens who are required to pay out of their own pockets for their own civil legal proceedings;
- It further strains the states' limited financial resources in the midst of the COVID-10 pandemic;
- It frustrates the federal law which expressly prohibits the federal government from funding illegal aliens in removal proceedings. Aliens who wish to be represented by legal counsel are free to do so, but federal law requires that it must be offered at no cost to the government, and;
- The fiscal and policy note for HB-750-2021 from last year estimated the cost of this program for legal representation to exceed \$6M a year plus increased administrative costs in the AG's office of almost \$200K per year. This is a financial strain we simply cannot afford.

For these reasons, I ask that you vote for an Unfavorable Report for SB 129- Immigration- Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program.

Thank you for your time,
Sarah Price (ACRWC)
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