



Testimony of Greater Baltimore Urban League in Support of HB114 /SB129

This testimony is submitted by the Greater Baltimore Urban League (GBUL) in support of HB114/SB129, which would create a legal representation program for detained Marylanders facing deportation. GBUL is a nonprofit civil rights organization in Baltimore City that helps disadvantaged Marylanders gain access to equal opportunity in employment, education, health care, housing, and the civic arena. GBUL is one of the local affiliates of the National Urban League, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, multi-ethnic, social service organization. Through direct service delivery, advocacy, referrals, community capacity building, information dissemination and technical assistance, the League accomplishes its mission to improve social and economic conditions and opportunities for African-Americans and other people who face barriers to full participation in American society.

Currently, individuals in deportation proceedings do not have a right to government-funded counsel. ICE continues to have the power to detain and transfer Maryland residents in jails and prisons across the country. The Baltimore Immigration Court is the only immigration court in Maryland and has a huge backlog of over 41,900 pending cases (immigrationcases.org). There are only 11 organizations in Baltimore that provide free legal support and aid. Ensuring that detained Marylanders at risk of deportation have equal access to legal representation is imperative to avert further family separation, systemic and economic oppression.

The Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Bill will address the current inequities and barriers that Marylanders at risk of deportation often face. We recognize how this comprehensive bill would lessen the equity gap of legal access and services for communities that we strive to serve daily. Therefore, we fully support HB114/SB129 and encourage our partners and representatives to also vote in support of this critical legislation.

Thank you for your service and consideration.

Tiffany Majors.
President and Chief Executive Officer
Greater Baltimore Urban League
512 Orchard St.
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Majors", is written over the typed name and title.