

Hearing Date: February 3, 2022

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TESTIMONY ON SB#0129- POSITION: FAVORABLE
Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Sherry Glazer

My name is Sherry Glazer and I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0129, Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program.

I am a retired lawyer who believes that anyone deprived of their liberty is entitled to due process protections, including access to legal counsel. I am also influenced by my Jewish values which caution us regarding our conduct toward the “stranger”. Indeed oppression of the “stranger” is the most repeated injunction in the Torah, and aptly applies to immigrants who are “strangers” in our midst.

Like many Americans, I am a descendant of immigrants. I am old enough to remember that two of my immigrant grandparents could barely speak English, received little formal education, and endured hardships that would be unthinkable to many of us today. They worked hard to become American citizens and were grateful for that opportunity. I shudder to imagine their fates had they been detained without counsel, separated from their families, or worse still deported back to Europe on the brink of the Holocaust.

Senate Bill 0129 would protect immigrants in this State who are detained during their immigration proceedings, by providing them with competent legal counsel. As the proposed bill states in its preamble, legal representation dramatically increases the chance that an individual achieves a successful outcome in their immigration case. This has been demonstrated by universal representation programs in both Baltimore City and Prince George’s County.

One of the saddest images in our recent history is one of immigrant children separated from their families, merely because their parents were awaiting disposition of their immigration cases. Access to legal representation during immigration proceedings would help keep Maryland families together. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB# 0129.**