

SB0129, Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program  
Testimony in **Support**

To: Chair Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
From: Arielle Juberg, Baltimore, Maryland 21234

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) in Baltimore. SURJ is working in collaboration with CASA de Maryland. I attend a church in Essex, volunteer at several Baltimore organizations, and participate in CASA's Ally Network. I am testifying in **support** of SB0129, Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program

I care about SB0129 because I come from a family of immigrants. At the turn of the last century, my great-great-grandmother fled Kiev, Russia. My family believes she was expelled from the area during a pogrom targeting Russian Jewish communities. She eventually immigrated to America and settled in Buffalo. If she had been turned away from this country, her future (and that of my family) could have been lost as the darkness of the pogroms, the world wars, and the Holocaust swept over Europe.

Just like my family, so many immigrants in Maryland have fled danger in their home countries. If they are swept up in deportation hearings in immigration court, they face permanent family separation, detention, and renewed persecution in their country of origin. With stakes this high, we must provide legal representation in immigration court.

Immigration laws are complex and difficult to understand, especially if English is not your first language. Justice in these cases should not be determined by your ability to hire a lawyer. In fact, legal representation is the difference between winning and losing in immigration court. In Baltimore Immigration Court, those with legal representation were four times more likely to win their case. However, 81% of detained immigrants in Maryland have *no* representation at any point in their case. This is why we need Universal Representation — so that, regardless of background or income, ALL people receive due process under the law.

If we had Universal Representation, Eddy (a member of our immigrant community) may have had a different future. Eddy was pulled over for a driving violation and detained in the Howard County Detention Center. Eddy was transferred to detention centers in Jessup, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and finally deported, leaving behind his wife and three-year-old daughter. During this entire process, Eddy had no legal representation. Not only is this unjust, it is also incredibly disruptive to families and communities who are already vulnerable. Universal Representation would guarantee people like Eddy receive a fair trial and increase the likelihood of them remaining with their families.

My family was able to escape persecution due to America's immigration policy. I want to offer the same opportunity to our immigrant neighbors. Universal representation is needed to give immigrants a fair trial in immigrant court. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to **support** SB0129. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.