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Stanley J Binder
Middletown, MD 21769

TESTIMONY ON HB0114 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and member of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Stanley J Binder

My name is Stan Binder. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of **HB0114, Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program.**

Thank you Chair Smith and Vice Chair Waldstreicher for your time and attention. I am Stan Binder and I am a member of the Beth Sholom and Kol Ami congregations in Frederick, MD. I have been active in supporting the homeless community, children in foster care, and as a tutor in Frederick County. I am retired from the National Education Association. I care very deeply about justice and sanctuary for people who are fleeing to the United States from violence and oppression in their countries of origin.

I am the son and grandson of refugees from Nazi Germany. My mother and her parents came to the United States in April, 1939. My paternal grandparents and great-grandparents came to the United States from the oppression and persecution of Jews in Czarist Russia. Only six people from both sides of the family, who remained in Europe in 1939 were still alive in 1945.

I was a project manager on contracts that developed and supported the case tracking systems for the immigration courts and the INS. In that capacity I had the opportunity to observe immigration hearings in Arlington, VA and Manhattan, NY. The government was represented by the Immigration Judge, Justice Department Attorneys and support staff. The immigrants did not speak English, did not have an attorney, and relied on a court provided interpreter for their testimony. One immigrant said he fled his home because soldiers came to his village and killed his brother. Even I could tell that the interpreter changed "soldiers" to "people".

In the interests of fairness and humanity, immigrants should have their own legal representation in court. Their lives may hang in the balance. Thank you for taking up this matter and I hope you pass the legislation that would provide fair representation to immigrants in immigration legal matters. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0129.**