



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Judiciary

Testimony on: HB0559 – Probation Before Judgment – Probation Agreements – Probation Not Deportation

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 15, 2022

Bill Contact: Delegate Wanika Fisher

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members across all districts in Montgomery County as well as a number of nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep residents healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0559 because although it will benefit all Marylanders facing charges for small offenses, it will be particularly beneficial for immigrants in our communities.

HB0559 will afford courts more flexibility in sentencing by allowing probation before judgement rather than after a person pleads guilty or nolo contendere.

The perception of immigrants as criminals is just not true and is not supported by any evidence. If anything, immigrants are less likely to break the law than citizens because they have much more to lose. However, small infractions, such as speeding, broken tail lights, and other small offenses, will place a guilty plea and a sentence on their record. This is often the trigger for federal immigration enforcement to arrest and deport them, causing families to be fractured, leaving spouses and children behind. HB0559 will prevent immigrants from being deported for having a record of a conviction for a small infraction of the law.

HB0559 will protect our immigrant community from deportation for small offenses that would otherwise be the catalyst for deportation proceedings. Therefore, DTMG strongly supports HB0696 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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