

Jan. 31, 2022
Dr. Anna Rubin
Columbia, MD 20145

TESTIMONY ON (HB#114) - POSITION: (FAVORABLE)
Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Dr. Anna I. Rubin

My name is Anna Rubin. I am a resident of District 13 in Columbia. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#114, Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings.

First, I would like to thank Delegate Williams, the sponsor of this bill. I am a retired professor from UMBC and a member of the Columbia Jewish Congregation (CJC) in Columbia. I also represent CJC in the Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice.

My congregation believes all residents of Maryland deserve respect, justice, safety, and opportunities to thrive and prosper. The majority of our congregants are children and grandchildren of migrants fleeing oppression and poverty in Europe and North Africa - as am I. Our families include adopted children from South America. We want our state to welcome those who have fled from terror while they try and rebuild their lives. Many are essential workers and their work in grocery stores, cleaning crews, restaurants and warehouses has made our lives possible during the COVID pandemic.

I fully agree with the position of many organizations representing immigrants, including CASA, who know how important legal representation is for those detained for real or perceived immigration violations. It is extremely difficult to represent oneself in immigration litigation. I believe that all people deserve legal representation, whether they face deportation, eviction, or criminal penalties. To deny legal counsel is to deny due process.

All immigrants in Maryland, including those transferred by ICE to another state, deserve to have access to government-appointed lawyers. There are established organizations who stand ready to implement this legislation. It is more critical than ever that those who have lived, worked or attended school in Maryland be granted legal representation or if first detained in Maryland, but transferred to a state without these provisions.

Immigrants deserve due process and government-appointed legal representation. I respectfully urge this committee to return a (favorable/favorable with amendments) report on HB#114.