



Formerly known as CAIR Coalition

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January 13, 2025

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 154/House Bill 103: Access to Counsel in Evictions
– Task Force Termination and Special Fund**

Dear Chair Guzzone & Committee Members,

I write to show my support individually as a resident of Maryland as well as organizationally, on behalf of the Amica Center for Immigrant Rights. Immigrant community members across the state are vulnerable in many contexts, including the immigration deportation system, but also in the eviction system. Evictions have devastating consequences on the individuals and families. They destabilize families, disrupt communities and strain public resources through increased demand for emergency shelters, health care and social services.

One of the consequences of ICE detention is that a person who is a primary income provider for their family and household is no longer able to contribute to paying rent, which can lead to eviction proceedings. But, thankfully Maryland has invested in creating the Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) program. We urge this committee to make a favorable report on SB 154 to ensure that this critical program is provided a permanent funding stream. Doing so will lead to fiscal savings as every dollar invested into ACE yields a \$3.50-\$4.80 economic benefit, amounting to an estimated \$46.7 million in FY 2024. In short, passing SB154 will make permanent the improved outcomes ACE has demonstrated, such as 88% of ACE services recipients remained in their homes at the conclusion of their cases. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions about my written testimony.

Sincerely,

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