



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony OPPOSED to HB 85 - Correctional Services - Transfers to Federal Authorities - Undocumented Immigrants (Protecting Marylanders From Violent Offenders Act of 2025)

To: Delegate Luke Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee
From: Jim Caldiero, Lead Advocate, Immigration,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Date: February 19, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in OPPOSITION to **HB 85-
Correctional Services - Transfers to Federal Authorities - Undocumented
Immigrants (Protecting Marylanders From Violent Offenders Act of 2025)**
I encourage the members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee to vote NO on
this bill.

Over the past seven years, the Maryland General Assembly has successfully
enacted laws that protect our immigrant neighbors, like the Dream Act, MVA
Confidentiality, Protection for Witnesses via the U-Visa, Probation Before
Judgment, Dignity Not Detention, and the Access to Care Act.

These laws have made Maryland safer and healthier—not just for our immigrant
residents—but for all Marylanders. Moreover, even county governments have
protected our immigrant neighbors from unwarranted intrusion and participation
with federal immigration authorities with ordinances such as Howard County’s
Liberty Act that was overwhelmingly approved by voters.

The current presidential administration’s intentions regarding the deportation of
undocumented immigrants are clear but the methods may be inconsistent. As the
American Immigration Council found, previous methods such as the Criminal
Alien Program and its subordinate unit components were shown not to have a
single, coherent approach.¹

Moreover, federal immigration authorities may be unprepared to handle all these
transfers as the American Civil Liberties Union found in a Freedom of Information Act
request leading to “inhumane and life-threatening” conditions and situations.²

Requiring Maryland correctional facilities to transfer undocumented immigrants into federal custody places correction authorities at legal risk. In 2017, Attorney General Frosh issued guidance to local law enforcement agents indicating that participation with federal authorities in the enforcement of immigration laws could expose local law enforcement officers to potential liability if they honor Immigration and Customs Enforcement or Customs and Border Protection requests. And Attorney General Brown just joined with the Attorneys General of California, New York, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Mexico and Vermont arguing that state resources cannot be commandeered or used for federal immigration enforcement.³

My faith—that I share with more than 4000 Unitarian Universalists statewide—calls me to seek justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, values which our previous General Assemblies have embraced with the passage of the bills I mentioned. Subjecting undocumented immigrant prisoners to potentially inhumane and life-threatening conditions is anathema to my faith's values and the values expressed in Maryland's Declaration of Rights against "cruel and unusual pains and penalties."

Please VOTE NO on **HB 85**.

Thank you for your consideration.

1. https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/cap_fact_sheet_8-1_fin_0.pdf
2. <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-foia-litigation-continues-to-disclose-ice-proposals-to-expand-immigration-detention-nationwide>
3. <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2025/012325.pdf>