

**Testimony on House Bill – Favorable  
HB639 Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety (Aviation Health and  
Safety Act)**

**Environment and Transportation Committee**

**February 19, 2026**

Dear Honorable Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, Members of the Committee

I, Lia Nigro, wish to offer favorable testimony in support of **HB639 Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety (Aviation Health and Safety Act)**

Current conditions on deportation flights are dangerous and inhumane. Maryland has the ability to control some of these conditions for those flights refueling at BWI, and to make a statement about health and safety expectations that can be a model for other states. We should do so.

There are very practical reasons for the requirements proposed in HB639. While BWI is not a huge deportation hub, 84 such flights stopped there in 2025, a number likely to increase. The conditions and stress passengers on these flights experience are a strong potential trigger for health emergencies—from asthma and heart attacks to embolisms from being shackled and not able to move freely. Background medical information can save lives.

Similarly, relief from shackles to the extent Maryland can provide not only demonstrates our state's humanity but may save lives. Shackling as it is currently being conducted, for an entire plane of individuals, prevents timely evacuation of aircraft. We do not need such a hazard on our runways any longer than we can avoid.

This bill is also important on moral grounds. Innocent people being shackled is not a sight we should ignore. Let's stand up and do what we can.

I urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue **a favorable report on HB639.**

Lia Nigro, Resident District 12A (21044)

