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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0639 - Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety  
(Aviation Health and Safety Act)

2/19/2026

TO: Chair Marc Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Jess Hencke

Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, my name is Jess Hencke, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to support HB0639, the Aviation Health and Safety Act. If enacted, this act would ensure a number of measures committed to transparency and the importance of human safety. Requiring collected records about who is on board and where they are being sent is standard passenger documentation, and should be even more important when transporting supposedly “violent criminals;” yet this is something the current administration’s DOJ has been negligent about. There should be a paper trail for any detainee on a flight.

Additionally, the requirement to remove certain restraints while refueling will allow for escape in the event of a dangerous accident. Even supposed criminals deserve safety in the event of an accident. For the many that we know are innocent of any crime, just as much reason to document where they are going, in the hopes of returning them back home to the US.

I urge you to support HB0639 and help ensure that all flights out of Maryland maintain the dignity and safety of anyone on board a flight out, while keeping meaningful records about where those folks are headed.