



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 Corman, Vice Chair Guyton, Members of the Committee

Indivisible HoCoMD offers favorable testimony in support of **HB639 Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety (Aviation Health and Safety Act)**.

Established in 2017 as part of the national Indivisible movement, Indivisible Howard County has more than 1,700 members focused on making our county and state safe, equitable, and welcoming for all residents. There are 49 Indivisible chapters in Maryland and over 2,500 nationwide.

HB639 seeks to establish minimum health and safety requirements for detained individuals on flights landing at BWI. This is increasingly important since the number of flights with detained indivisible passing through Maryland airports has increased. In 2025 87 ICE flights passed through BWI. In 2024, there were none. [ICE-Flight-Monitor-US-Immigration-Enforcement-Flights-Report_Dec2025.pdf](#)

Given the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to build detention centers in Maryland, it is likely that the number of flights will continue to increase.

The State has a responsibility to safeguard all passengers on flights through Maryland airports. The FAA's current evacuation standards mandate that all passengers must be capable of evacuating an aircraft within 90 seconds. This is impossible if individuals are in restraints. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/14/25.803>.

There is every reason to believe that detainees on ICE flights are held in unsafe and unhealthy conditions. Flight attendants for Avelo Airlines which once contracted with ICE, complained about unsafe conditions on ICE flights with passengers in shackles (although many have committed civil, not criminal, violations) and deprived of food, water, and bathroom breaks. We have recently seen videos of the Baltimore detention centers where detainees were held in squalid, crowded, and very unhealthy conditions.

https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/investigations/ice-detention-facility-overcrowding-baltimore-whistleblower-dhs-unsanitary-trump/65-03dda8d7-49a9-4caf-b001-db5e12a04158?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

IndivisibleHoCoMD urges the Committee to ensure the safety of all airline passengers in Maryland and give a **favorable report on HB 639**.

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