

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:

Shannon Davis offers favorable testimony in support of HB639 Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety (Aviation Health and Safety Act).

I have called Glen Burnie home since 2008. My husband has lived here his entire life, and I have come to love this part of our beautiful state as much as he does. We are raising our son here and teaching him to care about his community, even those who pass through it briefly. Living within walking distance of BWI Airport and gaining a deeper understanding of its crucial role in the lives of our neighbors and businesses has expanded the ways in which I think of “community.” We do our best to be good neighbors with the airport, and always hope for that to be reciprocated.

Although we love to watch the planes and imagine the adventures those aboard might be embarking on, we also know that not everyone transiting through BWI is flying the friendly skies. It is no secret that ICE deportation flights use our airport and its affiliated service providers. Detained passengers are often shackled or restrained in more extreme ways that prohibit movement entirely. This is not merely uncomfortable or dehumanizing; it can be life-threatening in the event of an emergency. This bill proposes common-sense measures to keep these passengers safe, including documenting medical issues and attorney contact information should a restrained passenger require emergency medical care. It requires guardianship information for minors (who are especially vulnerable to abuses in the immigration and carceral systems), and I think we can all agree children deserve extra care. The requirements of this bill are not burdensome; in fact, I consider them the bare minimum to ensure the safety and well being of people who cannot advocate for themselves.

I care deeply about this bill as a Marylander, as a resident of Anne Arundel County, and as a mother. I also care as someone who works in immigration law. I serve low-income immigrants in need of legal advice and support navigating a system designed to prevent them and their families from obtaining the benefits they seek. Contrary to the

inflammatory rhetoric that often clouds the issue, these benefits are as basic as a safe place to live, freedom from fear of persecution, and dignified work. If any of my clients or their family members were to be detained by ICE and placed on one of these flights, it would be heartbreaking. It would be even worse to know that they were being transported in chains or a full-body restraint, placing them at heightened risk of death or injury while on the plane. As people of conscience, we are in a moment where the powers that be are refuting the human rights and dignity of migrants. We must face this moment with compassion. Maryland owes a duty of care to all who visit our state, however briefly or for whatever reason they are here.

I urge the House Environment and Transportation Committee to issue a favorable report on HB639.

Shannon Davis
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