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Committee: Environment and Transportation Committee  
Testimony on: HB 0639 Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety (Aviation Health and Safety Act)  
Organization: Individual  
Person Submitting: Philippa Gasnier  
Position: Favorable  
Hearing Date: February 19, 2026

Dear Chairman Korman and members of the committee,

I am writing in favor of HB-0639 (HB 0639 Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety (Aviation Health and Safety Act)), which would set certain standards and procedures for flights with detainees.

The media has reported that ICE flights have not accounted for the safety of passengers and flight attendants in the event of an emergency. There has been no training for flight attendants on evacuation of shackled passengers and no accounting in protocols or plane modifications for emergency exits involving detained passengers.

I am also concerned about possible legal liability. I have seen reports that there were at least six incidents on ICE charter flights requiring evacuations between 2014 and 2019. If Maryland does not take action to ensure that safety protocols are in place and followed, we risk lawsuits and costly damages, in addition to possible tragedies.

I support HB-0639 as an important safety measure and ask that you vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you,  
Philippa Gasnier