



Testimony on SB 505 - Favorable

SB 505 - Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety (Aviation Health and Safety Act)

Senate Finance Committee

February 18, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Beidle, and Members of the Committee,

Doctors for Camp Closure Maryland chapter offers favorable testimony in support of SB 505 - Transportation - Aviation - Passenger Health and Safety (Aviation Health and Safety Act).

Doctors for Camp Closure is a non-partisan organization of over 2,200 physicians and health care professionals from all specialties who oppose inhumane detention. We advocate for humane and just treatment for all.

At its core, this bill is about upholding Maryland's values of basic dignity and well-being for all people who find themselves in our state, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. This bill affirms that Maryland should stand firm in its commitment to safety, due process, and belief in a shared humanity - by prohibiting dangerous and inhumane practices that also inhibit our own medical providers' abilities to do their jobs of alleviating suffering.

Multiple factors put people flying in shackles at greatly increased risk of medical harm. Flights have an artificial cabin environment: lower air pressure (which affects multiple body systems), reduced oxygen levels, and low humidity. Prolonged immobility allows blood to pool in the arms and especially legs, where it can form dangerous clots, particularly if dehydration thickens the blood. It also can lead to muscle stiffness and soreness, swelling, joint compression, and nerve impingement. In combination with decreased cabin pressure and/or dehydration, people can experience painful bloating, dangerous constipation, and urinary tract infections. 3-point shackles (wrists, ankles, and waist—all connected) cause pain and harms including: a breakdown of the skin and damage to surrounding structures leading to severe bruising, abrasions, lesions, fractures, neuropathies, ulcers, infections, scarring, lacerations, and injuries to the ulnar, radial, and median nerves. An additional restraint, the straightjacket-like "WRAP", is even more

dangerous. The weight and tripping hazards of the ankle cuffs and chains makes it difficult to walk safely. That, dizziness, and lack of normal arm movement have led to falls boarding and deboarding.

People on ICE flights get transferred repeatedly, sometimes up to 20 times. Flights can have circuitous routes and multiple stops; two people deported to Asian countries were reportedly shackled for 73 hours and 80 hours straight. Reports are common of limited food, water, and bathroom breaks—with people still in shackles, which makes good toileting hygiene very difficult. It is also common for people to soil and wet themselves during these flights, which is devastating but also hazardous in terms of skin integrity, infection, and spread of infection.

As a state, we have a moral, and arguably legal, responsibility to reject participation in inhumane processes to the greatest degree possible—and to demand that we in the medical profession have the tools to instead act as healers.

For these reasons, Doctors for Camp Closure Maryland urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB505.

Kate Sugarman, MD

Doctors for Camp Closure co leader

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