

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0988, Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and
Arrests - Limitations
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Chair William C. Smith, Jr. & Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jennifer Hess and I have lived in Silver Spring for almost 39 years. I am among a group of neighbors who last year formed North Woodside Civil Resistance out of concern for the threat to our democracy posed by the actions of the Trump administration. I am writing to support SB 0988, to put limitations on stops, detentions, and arrests at judicial facilities.

There are many things that alarm me about the Trump administration's immigration practices, such as the use of dragnet arrests based on racial, language, and employment profiling. Then there is the brutality of the arrests, in which masked thugs viciously attack our immigrant neighbors, all while slandering them as violent criminals and “the worst of the worst.” Federal agents seem to delight in using excessive force – indeed ICE’s calling card is the smashed car window, the mother thrown on the ground, the children crying in fear. Videos of brutal apprehensions are posted on government social media accounts, as if for entertainment. Meanwhile our president recklessly smears entire immigrant communities as “garbage.”

But perhaps most insidious is the practice of apprehending immigrants when they appear at courthouses. They are invariably doing their utmost to comply with the law and time and again, they are rewarded with detention and deportation. This practice belies the idea that the administration’s immigration policy is about public safety. Instead of seeking out the “worst of the worst” ICE is going for the easy targets.

As New Jersey journalist Julie Roginsky wrote recently, “Criminals are hard to catch. They don’t check in, provide an address to law enforcement, or show up for hearings. So instead, ICE goes after people who play by the rules to meet their deportation quotas.” It’s lazy and cowardly in addition to being manifestly unjust. And it certainly doesn’t make me feel safer.

The outrage of arresting people who are following the rules is compounded by the nightmare they face after their arrests. Once detained, migrants are shackled for long periods of time on buses and planes with no food, water, or functioning toilets. They are warehoused in often freezing holding cells with no access to hygiene or medical care. Finally they are deposited in detention centers, where they face barbaric and dehumanizing conditions, including physical and sexual abuse, extreme overcrowding, inadequate and sometimes spoiled food, a hazardous lack of hygiene, and extremely limited access to medical care or counsel. As of this writing, dozens have died this year under these conditions. And it is important to remember, some 75% of these individuals have never been convicted of any crime.

I am aware that there are limits to our ability in Maryland to restrain the actions of the federal government, no matter how lawless. However if we stand up for our Maryland values, for **American** values, we can throw sand in the gears of the repressive machine and inspire other

states to do the same. Ruling judicial centers off-limits for ICE's predations seems a vital step in that pursuit. Thank you for your consideration.

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