

SB0988 - SUPPORT
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SB0988 – Judicial Facilities – Stops, Detentions, and Arrests - Limitations

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
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Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher & Members of the Committee:

My name is William Mascioli. I have lived in Silver Spring, Maryland, for more than 40 years. I raised my children here. Distraught over the threats to our democracy and basic norms of decency posed by the actions and policies of the Trump administration, a group of neighbors and I last year formed North Woodside Civil Resistance. I am writing to urge a favorable report on SB 0988, to put limitations on stops, detentions, and arrests at judicial facilities.

The Trump administration's immigration practices ought to shock us all. Aside from the well documented use of dragnet arrests based on racial, language, and employment profiling, 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 to the ground while her children stand by crying from fear. They post videos celebrating brutal apprehensions on government social media accounts, as if for entertainment. Meanwhile our president recklessly smears entire immigrant communities as "garbage."

All this is horrible and shocking, but perhaps most insidious is the practice of apprehending immigrants when they appear at courthouses. These are people doing their utmost to comply with the law, yet time and time 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 in service of satisfying grotesque quotas.

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 as Marylanders we stand up for our 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 an obvious but vital step in that direction. Accordingly, I urge a favorable report on SB0988 and thank you for your consideration.