

BILL NO: Senate Bill 0988
TITLE: Judicial Facilities – Stops, Detentions, and Arrests – Limitations
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: March 12, 2026
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a nonprofit legal organization dedicated to protecting the physical safety, economic security, and civil rights of women and their families across Maryland. Through our legal services, policy advocacy, and education, we work to ensure that individuals—particularly immigrants and survivors of violence—can safely access the courts and comply with legal obligations without fear. When courthouses and other judicial spaces become sites of intimidation or civil immigration enforcement, access to justice is fundamentally compromised.

We have all heard the federal government talk about removing violent criminals from our streets, while the reality we see is the targeting and deportation of law-abiding immigrants—and even U.S. citizens—particularly people of color. ICE agents have been present in and around courts and other administrative buildings where immigrants, who entered this country legally and are following all required rules, must report for check-ins related to their immigration cases. For immigrants, failure to attend these check-ins can result in deportation, yet attending them can also lead to detention by ICE.

This must stop. If we have rules that require immigrants to check in at courthouses and other administrative buildings, we must also ensure those spaces are secure and free from civil immigration enforcement. This bill, if enacted, would prohibit the detention or arrest of an individual for an alleged or adjudicated offense that is subject only to a civil penalty while the individual is in a judicial facility or is traveling within one mile of a judicial facility for the purpose of attending a meeting, hearing, or other official proceeding. It would also render any evidence collected during such a detention or arrest inadmissible in court and allow the person detained or arrested, or the Attorney General, to file a civil claim against the individual who carried out the unlawful detention or arrest.

This is an important safeguard that will allow immigrants to follow the legal process toward citizenship without fear. We strongly support this bill and respectfully recommend a **FAVORABLE** report.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.