



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Favorable Report - SB 988 - Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and Arrests – Limitations

To: Sen. Will Smith, Chair, Sen. Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair, and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
From: Jim Caldiero, Lead Advocate Immigration,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry-Maryland
Date: March 12, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in favor of **SB 988 - Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and Arrests – Limitations**.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its subordinate agencies—Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the Border Patrol—are employing constitutionally questionable and violent tactics against our immigrant neighbors and even U.S. citizens. Many hard-working, law-abiding, undocumented citizens (who are in the country under parole while their asylum claims are being processed) must report routinely to immigration officials in courthouses. Yet, the actions of ICE make such required and routine visits fraught with fear as ICE agents swoop down at the courthouse and arrest our immigrant neighbors who are following the law.

Axios, a news organization, has reported that ICE has ramped up immigrant arrests at courthouses. Agents, often dressed in plainclothes, have been arresting our immigrant neighbors at courthouses nationwide, for example: in Houston, at immigration courts in Annandale and Loudoun County, VA. As recently as June 24, ICE agents showed up at the Mitchell Courthouse in Baltimore. In many cases, these seizures are based on “administrative warrants” signed by the very agents doing the seizing, not by judges.

Targeting courthouses is a significant diversion from previous policy that prohibited ICE agents from arresting immigrants at courthouses. It may violate our constitutional principle of due process. It certainly engenders fear in immigrant communities and among immigrants who are trying to obey the law.

My faith, which I share with more than 4000 Unitarian Universalists in Maryland, calls me to promote and affirm and defend justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. These values are expressed in our Maryland Declaration of Rights, which ensures that all people are safe and secure in their persons against unwarranted seizure.

I encourage you to report favorably on **SB 988**.

Thank you.

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Sources:

ICE Ramps Up Immigrant Arrests, Axios.

<https://www.axios.com/local/richmond/2025/06/26/ice-virginia-courthouse-arrests-trump>

Amid investigation into ICE notification, Baltimore court policies are being strengthened, WBFF,

<https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/ice-investigation-baltimore-courthouse-policy>

ICE Enforcement Actions Spark Community Concern in Annapolis, HereBaltimore,

<https://www.herebaltimore.com/ice-enforcement-annapolis/>

Maryland Declaration of Rights.

<https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/43const/html/00dec.html>

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