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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0309, Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and Arrests -  
Limitations

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TO: Chair J. Sandy Bartlett & Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Dr. Jessica Metcalf-Burton

Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Dr. Jessica Metcalf-Burton, I live in Columbia, Maryland, and I am writing to support HB 0309, to put limitations on Stops, Detentions, and Arrests at Judicial Facilities.

The Federal Government talks about removing violent criminals from our streets while taking actions that are inconsistent with these stated goals. Federal agents have been hanging around courts and other administrative buildings where immigrants – who entered this country legally and are following all the rules to check in regarding their immigration cases – are required to go. If an immigrant doesn't go to the check-ins, then they are violating the immigration rules and can be deported. If an immigrant who attends their check-in is at risk of being detained by ICE agents and deported anyway, this dis-incentivizes following the immigration rules and makes us all less safe.

If we have rules for immigrants to check in at courthouses and other administrative buildings, we have to make these facilities secure from ICE Agents. This bill, if enacted, would prohibit detaining or arresting 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 1 mile of a judicial facility for the purpose of attending a meeting, a hearing, or another official proceeding in that judicial facility.

It also makes any evidence collected at the detention or arrest inadmissible in court and allows the person to be detained or arrested, or the Attorney General to file a civil claim against the person who detained or arrested them. This is an important safeguard, which will allow immigrants to follow the process towards becoming citizens and hold federal agents accountable for bad-faith acts in Maryland.

I urge you to support favorably passing HB 0309. Help ensure that anyone doing their due diligence to be in our country, through the very procedures set up for them to do so, be protected to do just that.