
BILL NO:	House Bill 0495
TITLE:	Criminal Procedure - Immigration Arrest - Immunity in Connection With Court Proceeding
COMMITTEE:	Judiciary
HEARING DATE:	February 25, 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 seek help from the courts without facing additional harm or intimidation. When access to the justice system is undermined, the people we serve are placed at an even greater risk.

HB0495 ensures that individuals who are attending a court proceeding in good faith—whether as parties, witnesses, or family members—are protected from immigration arrest while traveling to, participating in, or returning from that proceeding. It also prohibits anyone from making an arrest in violation of these protections.

Over the past year, we have been deeply concerned by reports of immigration-related arrests in and around courthouses, which create fear in immigrant communities and deter individuals from appearing for court proceedings. When victims and witnesses avoid the courts out of fear of detention, the justice system is fundamentally undermined. HB0495 offers critical clarity and reassurance of due process at a time when trust in public institutions is especially fragile.

The bill aligns directly with the mission of the Women's Law Center of Maryland. We are dedicated to ensuring the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women throughout the state. By allowing individuals to access the courts and participate in legal proceedings without fear of immigration enforcement, HB0495 helps ensure that survivors can seek protection, stability, and justice for themselves and their families.

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.