



TESTIMONY FOR HB1536 Maryland Enforcement Limits and Transparency (MELT) Act

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lopez

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1536 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members are steadfast in their resistance to the involvement of Maryland residents in federal immigration enforcement activities without a Judicial Warrant. We do not endorse the actions of anyone (including law enforcement, contractors or other state personnel) deciding who needs to be detained or deported unless it is a judge. If there is a Judicial Warrant, our immigration system works just fine. It is people who take things into their own hands and destroy families and businesses because of their personal prejudices who make immigration enforcement into a horror show.

This bill, if enacted, would prohibit anyone, including the state, a unit of local government, a county sheriff, any agency, officer, employee, contractor, or agent of the state or a unit of local government from aiding in immigration enforcement without a Judicial Warrant. It would make the following actions illegal without the Judicial Warrant –

- providing access to an area that would otherwise require a Judicial warrant for law enforcement to access,
- sharing personal information of another with immigration authorities,
- delaying the departure of or detaining another by force or deceit with the intent to make the individual accessible to immigration authorities

If someone is harmed because of a violation of these requirements, they can bring suit against the party or parties that caused the harm and receive damages and injunctive and declarative relief. The Attorney General will have the ability to investigate and bring charges against anyone who violates these requirements, and in the case of businesses who receive contracts from the state, the state can nullify the contract, or decline to renew the contract, or set conditions on the contract.

Limiting the involvement of anyone who does not have a Judicial Warrant in the process of immigration enforcement will simplify the process and ensure that it is done in a legal and less chaotic manner. Additionally, it will ensure that people are not profiled and detained without cause.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and other legislation that treats law-abiding immigrants with the fairness all Marylanders deserve. We believe that by prioritizing the well-being and rights of every resident, we can foster a more inclusive and secure community for everyone.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition wholeheartedly supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.