

Testimony on House Bill 495 – Favorable
HB0495, Criminal Procedure - Immigration Arrest - Immunity in Connection With Court
Proceeding, House Judiciary Committee
February 23, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle Koul, and I am a constituent of District 31. I am writing **in support of HB0495, Criminal Procedure - Immigration Arrest - Immunity in Connection With Court Proceeding.**

Maryland needs to prepare for the chaos that may be coming our way.

Maryland House Bill 495: (1) Establishes that individuals attending court proceedings are immune from immigration arrests in or around courthouses. (2) Prohibits making an immigration arrest in violation of this act, specifically targeting arrests made solely because of suspected civil immigration violations. (3) Authorizes individuals to sue for declaratory and injunctive relief, allowing them to recover attorney's fees and court costs.

The bill does *not* prevent law enforcement from acting to ensure safety if a valid judicial warrant is presented.

It is unfortunate that this bill is necessary and that ICE has targeted courthouse locations. The ACLU contends these arrests undermine the administration of justice by creating a climate of fear, discouraging immigrants from appearing for court cases, testifying, or seeking protection. Chief justices and judges have argued that such arrests infringe on the judiciary's ability to provide equal access to justice, as witnesses and victims may avoid court, fearing detention. Finally, the 5th and 14th Amendments provide due process rights to all individuals within U.S. borders, regardless of status, which is violated by these arrests.¹

These arrests need to stop, as they violate due process, intimidate victims/witnesses and undermine public safety. Please issue a **favorable report on HB495** and keep our local law enforcement out of the mess this administration has created.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Dr. Michelle Koul (she/her)
Severna Park, MD 21146

¹<https://immigrantjustice.org/press-release/unlawful-ice-arrests-at-immigration-courthouses-prompt-lawsuit-by-advocates-and-immigrants/>