

Testimony on House Bill 309 – Favorable
HB309 – Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and Arrests - Limitations
House Judiciary Committee
January 27, 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 HB309 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.**

Maryland House Bill 309 proposes to prohibit law enforcement from stopping, detaining, or arresting individuals for civil offenses while they are in a judicial facility or traveling within one mile of it for official proceedings. The bill aims to protect access to justice by limiting arrests for civil penalties. Evidence obtained in violation of this Act would be inadmissible, and individuals affected could seek damages. Exceptions exist for criminal arrests, arrests with a warrant, and specific legal reasons.

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 HB309** 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/>