



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

Testimony: [HB0309](#) – Stops, Detentions, and Arrests - Limitations
Hearing Date: February 4, 2026
Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stewart
Committee: Judiciary
Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. We are also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#). Our organization works with residents and ally organizations to promote a safe climate and clean energy future. Specifically, we have worked extensively on building electrification to help Maryland achieve its ambitious climate goals, including net-zero emissions.

We urge you to vote favorably on **HB0309 – Stops, Detentions, and Arrests - Limitations** which would prohibit a person from being stopped, detained, or arrested for certain civil offenses 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.

Our organization works with The Climate Justice Wing and seeks to support and lift-up the issues, needs, and goals of frontline communities and communities of color mainly on climate related issues, but we work on many types of unjust issues.

Arrests in and around any court including family, traffic, immigration and criminal courts, create a "chilling effect" that undermines the justice system by discouraging victims and witnesses from attending their required check-ins or hearings..

The administration's unjust policy of allowing arrests at courthouses has forced immigrants to choose between attending mandatory hearings and risking arrest or missing court and facing an automatic deportation order. This untenable choice has led to a surge in absenteeism, undermining the integrity of the entire immigration court system.

Other states are filing or have passed similar legislation similar to HB0309 and this bill will protect the rights of all residents and support the integrity of our judicial system.

For these reasons, we **support** this bill and recommend a **Favorable** report.

Howard County Climate Action
Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee
www.HoCoClimateAction.org
HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com