

HB 309: Judicial Facilities – Stops, Detentions, and Arrests – Limitations
House Judiciary Committee
February 2, 2026
Position: Favorable

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the committee,

My name is Eileen Zeller. I live in Howard County (Clarksville, District 9A) and I am writing in support of HB 309.

My parents and grandparents survived the horrors of Nazi Germany and found refuge in the United States, a country that—despite its own antisemitism and other faults—welcomed them. Our family has always been grateful and proud to be American citizens. The ability of refugees and immigrants to find safety, freedom, protection, and justice in the United States is part of what I love fiercely about this country. And that is also why I feel so strongly about the need for HB 309.

You'll hear many reasons that people support this bill today. My primary reasons:

- Places like courthouses (and schools and places of worship) should be safe zones to maintain public trust and the integrity of the justice system. It is nauseating to me that they have become places of entrapment.
- It is the antithesis of justice to force 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, and undermines the integrity of the entire immigration court system.
- Maryland needs to ensure due process, protect the rights of state residents, and support the integrity of our judicial system.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 309.

Thank you.

Eileen Zeller