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TESTIMONY FOR HB0309
Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and Arrests - Limitations

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stewart
Committee: House Judiciary Committee
Organization Submitting: Indivisible Bowie and Beyond (IBBMD)
Person Submitting: Liz Enagonio, co-founder
Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony **in favor of HB0309** on behalf of Indivisible Bowie and Beyond (IBBMD). IBBMD is a group of several hundred grassroots activists in Bowie and surrounding areas in Prince George's County, working to bring justice, equality, and people-centric legislation to Maryland.

Immediately upon Trump's reelection in 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) issued a directive that allows agents to make arrests at courthouses. This policy has forced immigrants to choose between attending mandatory hearings and risking arrest or missing court and facing an automatic deportation order. This is personal to me. A member of my extended family has been awaiting an immigration court hearing since 2018. Because the court system is so backed up, this person has been required to attend mandatory check-ins in Baltimore as they await a hearing on their asylum petition. Their check-in is coming up. **What are they supposed to do?** Even I, a white female American citizen, have no earthly idea what to say. I still don't have a plan to help my family member proceed with this. We are all stressed and fearful.

HB0309 will prohibit a person from being stopped, detained, or arrested for civil offenses (ie, unresolved immigration status) while the individual is in, or traveling within 1 mile of, a judicial facility for the purpose of attending a meeting, a hearing, or other official proceeding in the Judicial facility. Further, any evidence obtained in violation of the Act would be inadmissible in a proceeding over which a State court or State or local agency has jurisdiction. In short, this bill would allow immigrants and

asylum seekers such as my family member to attend their required court hearings without fear of being snatched up outside the court building. In other words, they could comply with the law, as they have been for some 8 years already.

IBBMD strongly urges the Committee to recommend a FAVORABLE report and **pass HB0309**. We owe our immigrants and asylum seekers who are following the ordained path to request legal status an opportunity to do so without fear of arrest and deportation. ICE must be required to play fair!