



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Shared voices for liberal religious values in Maryland

HB309 Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and Arrests – Limitations

Favorable Report

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From: Jim Caldiero, Lead Advocate for Immigration, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland, 333 Dubois Road, Annapolis, MD, 21401 | Email: immigration@uulmmd.org

To: Del. J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair, Del. Debra Davis, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in favor of HB309, Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and Arrests – Limitations.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its subordinate agencies – Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the Border Patrol – are employing constitutionally questionable and violent tactics against our immigrant neighbors and even U.S. citizens. Many undocumented citizens, hard-working, law-abiding, who are in the country under parole while their asylum claims are being processed must report routinely to immigration officials in courthouses. Yet the actions of ICE make such required and routine visits fraught with fear as ICE agents swoop down at the courthouse and arrest our immigrant neighbors who are following the law.

Axios, a news organization, has reported that ICE has ramped up immigrant arrests at courthouses, its agents, often dressed in plainclothes arresting our immigrant neighbors at courthouses nationwide – in Houston, at immigration courts in Annandale and Loudoun County, VA – for example. As recently as June 24, ICE agents showed up at the Mitchell Courthouse in Baltimore. In many cases these seizures are based on “administrative warrants” signed by the very agents doing the seizing, not by judges.

Targeting courthouses is a significant diversion from previous policy that prohibited ICE agents from arresting immigrants at courthouses. It may violate our constitutional principle of due process. It certainly engenders fear in immigrant communities and among immigrants who are trying to obey the law.



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My faith, which I share with more than 4000 Unitarian Universalists in Maryland calls me to promote and affirm and defend justice, equity and compassion in human relations, values which are also expressed in our Maryland Declaration of Rights that ensures that all people are to be safe and secure in their persons against unwarranted seizure.

I encourage you to report favorably on HB309.

Thank you.

Sources:

ICE Ramps Up Immigrant Arrests, Axios.

<https://www.axios.com/local/richmond/2025/06/26/ice-virginia-courthouse-arrests-trump>

Amid investigation into ICE notification, Baltimore court policies are being strengthened, WBFF, <https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/ice-investigation-baltimore-courthouse-policy>

ICE Enforcement Actions Spark Community Concern in Annapolis, HereBaltimore,

<https://www.herebaltimore.com/ice-enforcement-annapolis/>

Maryland Declaration of Rights.

<https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/43const/html/00dec.html>