

HOUSE BILLS 403 AND 388

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO
IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT-PUBLIC SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS AND
COURTHOUSES-POLICIES
CRIMINAL PROCEDURE—CIVIL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT—
RESTRICTIONS**

BY KATHERINE C. GUGULIS, GAITHERSBURG, MD

My name is Kathy Gugulis and I am a long-term resident of Montgomery County. I oppose House Bills 403 and 388 because they will tie the hands of law enforcement in getting and keeping some of the most hardened criminals, rapists, and murderers off the street and behind bars. They will impose unreasonable and chilling requirements on public employees in schools, hospitals and courthouses, prohibiting them from cooperating with immigration authorities.

In August of last year, many of us were outraged and horrified by seven rapes reported in one month alone, of innocent young women and girls, some as young as 11 years old in Montgomery County by people who were in the country illegally. The County Executive and Council had implemented sanctuary policies that prohibited local law enforcement from cooperating with Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In September, hundreds of people rallied in front of the County Council building, calling on County officials to rescind that policy.

Rather than listening to their constituents, the County Council chose to use its official position to issue an outrageously ideological statement. They chose to describe Montgomery County residents and all those who voiced a justifiable and sincere outrage over these reported crimes as “Neo-Nazi sympathizers,” which served only to foment hate and division in the county.

Now the Montgomery County delegation to the General Assembly is trying to export these same dangerous sanctuary policies to the rest of the State. They claim they are trying to be “welcoming” to “immigrants,” regardless of their legal status, when in fact their policies are causing the most damage to the very communities they purport to protect.

The young women and children who were so horrendously violated last summer lived in the same communities as their attackers, who often were released from the county jail back into their communities. How is that fair or welcoming? How does that protect the innocent victims? Would you want to live in the same community as someone who raped and brutalized you?

Montgomery County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation. Black and brown people are now the majority population. We have immigrants who come from all parts of the world seeking to live a better life and to enjoy the freedoms that America offers to those who are willing to work hard and obey its laws. They come because we are a nation of law.

By allowing such sanctuary policies, County officials have sown seeds of discontent and distrust among those who came to this country the right way and who obey its laws. It will take a long time for Montgomery County to recover from the damage these sanctuary policies have caused. I urge you to reject these bills to keep the rest of the State safe from the same fate. Thank you.