



Indivisible: Central Maryland

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HB0677 – Indivisible Central Maryland_Enagonio Liz_SUPPORT

Indivisible Central Maryland SUPPORTS HB0677. Our core mission includes advocating for fair immigration policy. We do not believe immigrants and asylum seekers should be treated as criminals simply for the act of leaving their countries of origin to seek a better life in the US. Under international law, individuals have a right to seek asylum. As well, an immigrant who is undocumented has not committed a crime; being undocumented is a civil offense. We do not believe that asylum seekers nor immigrants should be confined in prisons, especially private prisons, where money motivates their jailers to keep them imprisoned when they have committed no crime. While immigration is controlled by federal law, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Immigration, Customs, and Enforcement Division (ICE) have initiated numerous programs that involve state and local law enforcement agencies. One is the 287g program, where DHS/ICE enter into written agreements to delegate immigration enforcement authority to state and local law enforcement officers. In Maryland, the 287(g) program has been established in three jurisdictions – Cecil, Frederick, and Harford counties. In 2008, the Frederick County Sheriff's Office entered into a partnership with ICE to begin the 287(g) Criminal Alien Program within the county. This partnership entailed training office personnel from both the county detention center and law enforcement operations to become authorized to identify and begin deportation proceedings against undocumented immigrants. The Frederick County Sheriff's Office is one of the few law enforcement offices nationwide that participate in both the jail enforcement program and the law enforcement task force program. In addition, the local detention center in Harford County participates in the 287(g) program. Cecil County began participating in the 287(g) program in February 2019. Anne Arundel County previously participated in the federal program starting in December 2017 but later withdrew in December 2018. Indivisible Central Maryland believes that imprisonment for the civil offense of being undocumented is morally indefensible. As compassionate human beings, we need to stand up against bullying and harassment toward our fellow humans, most of whom are black or brown, poor, and have faced life-threatening circumstances in their countries of origin. We do not believe the State of Maryland should participate in the imprisonment of persons who are seeking a better life in our nation. Condoning this injustice by building and operating detention centers and allowing jurisdictions to participate in the 287g program is anathema to our aspirations for liberty and justice for all. We SUPPORT HB0677, which will prevent local law enforcement from becoming tools and agents for the current inhumane, unjust, and immoral federal immigration system.

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