

Legal Representation Key to Marylanders' Access to Justice

Position Statement Supporting House Bill 750

Given before the House Judiciary Committee

Legal representation dramatically increases the chance that an individual achieves a fair and successful outcome in their immigration case. More than 400 Marylanders are forced to fight permanent separation from their family and community in detention every year. Of which, at least 7 out of 10 detained Marylanders are unable to access counsel in immigration proceedings. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 750 because ensuring that Marylanders have legal representation in immigration proceedings is a fair administration of justice.**

Providing a right to counsel to Maryland residents in immigration cases is a proven means of keeping families and communities together and avoiding the resulting social, economic, and public health costs of deportation. More than 600 children of detained Marylanders are harmed each year by having a parent being placed in immigration detention. Additionally, immigration proceedings have a disparate impact on Black and Brown households. Maryland residents must be able to invoke and enforce the right to legal representation in any immigration proceeding where their liberty is at stake to provide for equal access to justice and the courts.

Universal representation pilot programs in Baltimore City and Prince George's County have helped to keep many Maryland families together over the past three years. Marylanders facing deportation should have a right to legal representation in immigration proceedings, and the state should provide such representation to assist in the fair administration of justice. **For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests the Judiciary Committee to make a favorable report on House Bill 750.**

Equity Impact Analysis: House Bill 750

Bill Summary

Provides a right to counsel to Maryland residents in immigration cases.

Background

Providing a right to counsel to Maryland residents in immigration cases is a proven means of keeping families and communities together and avoiding the resulting social, economic, and public health costs of deportation. More than 400 Marylanders are forced to fight permanent separation from their family and community in detention

every year. Of which, at least 7 out of 10 detained Marylanders are unable to access counsel in immigration proceedings.

Equity Implications

More than 600 children of detained Marylanders are harshly and needlessly impacted each year by a parent being placed in immigration detention. Additionally, immigration proceedings have a disparate impact on Black and Brown households.

Impact

House Bill 750 will likely **increase racial and ethnic equity** in Maryland