



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0265
PROBATION BEFORE JUDGMENT – PROBATION AGREEMENTS – PROBATION
NOT DEPORTATION**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lee

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0265 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

This bill will protect our immigrant community from deportation for small offenses that would otherwise be the catalyst for deportation proceedings. The perception of immigrants as criminals is just not true and is not supported by any evidence. If anything, immigrants are less likely to break the law than citizens because they have much more to lose.

However, small infractions, such as speeding, failure to have their tail lights working, and other small offences will place a sentence on their record, which is often the trigger for federal immigration enforcement to arrest and deport them, causing families to be fractured, leaving spouses and children behind.

This bill will allow for probation before judgement, rather than sentencing when a person pleads guilty or nolo contendere. This will prevent immigrants from being deported for having a record of a conviction for a small infraction of the law.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.