

In Support of House Bill 559

Written Testimony submitted by Janice Alonzo

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My name is Janice Alonzo, and I am a senior academic advisor/adjunct faculty at the Community College of Baltimore County. I am also a doctoral student at Morgan State University working on my dissertation for a degree in Community College Leadership. My bachelor's degree is in Anthropology with a Spanish minor from Ithaca College (NY), and my master's degree is in International Affairs from Florida State University. My experience in higher education has spanned more than twenty years at three different institutions. I am fluent in Spanish and have working knowledge of a few other languages; I have also traveled to over twenty countries and spent a semester in Madrid, Spain in college. I am a U.S. citizen who was born in Syracuse, NY, and I have lived in three different states.

I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 559 because it needs to get passed so that everyone who has a PBJ is not deported. A close family member who has DACA received a DUI in 2020. After he went to court, his charge was a PBJ. He completed alcohol counseling classes even before his court hearing and is working on paying the fine incurred by the court. He made a mistake that night in 2020 but has taken full responsibility for what happened. This family member is married and has a small child; he also owns his own business, owns his own house, and pays taxes loyally every year. His child is the most important thing in his life, and every day we worry that this PBJ could lead to deportation and not seeing his child grow up every day. He takes his child to sports activities, indoor playgrounds, and more, and his child loves his daddy.

This family member and the rest of our family treat every day as special in case his days in the U.S. are limited. We have cried and are very worried about the fact that this family member could be sent back home because of this one-night mistake. What happened almost a year and a half ago was a wake-up call for him, and things truly got better for all of us after he realized what he had done. The fact that a PBJ could break apart this family and cause a little boy to lose his father has been very stressful and heart wrenching for all of us. The family could also lose their home, as he is the main income source for the family. His employees could also lose their jobs since they work for his company. This family member has been in the U.S. for seventeen years, and this is the only incident on his record. It would be unjust for our family to suffer unnecessarily because of a PBJ on this person's record. I am pleading to our elected officials that HB 559 is passed so that no family is affected by a PBJ and so that no one is subject to deportation because of having a PBJ on their record.