



**Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) testimony before the
Maryland House Judiciary Committee
HB 114, Access to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Program**

**Oral Testimony Delivered by Viviana Westbrook, State and Local Advocacy
Attorney
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Good afternoon, Chairman Clippinger, Vice-chair Moon, and other committee members. My name is Viviana Westbrook. I am the State and Local Advocacy Attorney at Catholic Legal Immigration Network, or CLINIC. CLINIC is the nation's largest charitable immigration legal services network. As such, we support HB 114 as adoption of this bill helps keep families together, preserves the rich diversity of our neighborhoods, and allows employers stability. We have seen firsthand what happens when immigrants do not have representation.

We talk about welcoming the stranger and treating people with dignity and kindness. The hardest thing to hear is that a bill is too costly. Such an expense should not — cannot — be compared when weighed against the value of human dignity and life and all the other benefits and gifts that immigrants bring Maryland. So I say passing HB 114 is imperative to us being the type of Maryland that seeks to preserve human rights and reach out to some of the most vulnerable people who are part of our community. The cost of not doing so, is what is too expensive.

Thank you for your time. CLINIC urges a favorable report for House Bill 114.