

Preserve the Liberty Act, Defend Our Privacy

On Question A, VOTE FOR THE LAW on November 8.

In 2017, Bel Air (Harford County) police stopped a woman and asked her to prove her identity not because she was acting suspiciously -- she had walked the same streets in her neighborhood many times -- but because she was Asian. She is a U.S. citizen who has lived for 30 years in the U.S. [Read the Baltimore Sun story](#)

Fortunately, Maryland enacted the Dignity Not Detention Act in 2021 that prohibits state and local law enforcement officers from asking about immigration or citizenship status during routine police work and now prevents such behavior as in Bel Air. However, the state law does not stop your daughter's teacher from asking about her citizenship status or a nurse checking your papers before taking your blood pressure. Howard County's Liberty Act was enacted to stop these actions.

In 2020, Howard County cemented its reputation as a safe and welcoming community when it enacted the [Liberty Act](#) that protects the privacy and safety of all of us by prohibiting county employees from asking about a person's citizenship or national origin and keeping citizenship information confidential.

However, some residents of Howard County mistakenly believe that the Liberty Act threatens the safety and financial wellbeing of our community. A citizens' group formed in 2021 collected enough signatures to put the repeal of the Liberty Act on the ballot as a referendum for the November 2022 election. These residents, who often oppose big government in your private life, don't seem to mind having your daughter's teacher asking about her citizen status. Or a nurse checking your papers before taking your blood pressure. The Liberty Act ensures that government officials focus on their jobs.

Columbia Jewish Congregation is a faith-based sponsor of the [Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice](#). As such, it encourages its members, if they are so inclined, to act to preserve the Liberty Act.

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November 8, 2022 Ballot: The referendum question on the ballot is listed as **Question A: Local Referendum by Petition (CB63-2020) County Resources-Federal Immigration.**

The voter choices are:

- **For the Law** -- keeps the Liberty Act and protects the privacy and safety of all
- **Against the Law** -- repeals the Liberty Act and threatens the safety of everyone in Howard County

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ON QUESTION A - VOTE FOR THE LAW

Breaking the Myths

- Twenty-one percent (21%) of Howard County residents are immigrants. The largest group of immigrants in Howard County are from Asian countries. Less than 1 in 10 immigrants is from Central and South America.
- Documented and undocumented immigrants pay taxes. Anyone employed in Maryland pays state, federal and county taxes. According to Comptroller Peter Franchot, immigrants in Maryland paid over \$100 million in taxes in 2021 alone.
- Immigrants do not increase crime rates. Research in multiple states shows that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes and less likely to go to jail than people born in the US. In addition, there is no correlation between increasing numbers of immigrants in a community and increasing rates of crime. In fact, some studies show just the opposite.
- Contrary to the concerns of people opposed to the Liberty Act, research in many localities shows no increase in crime in these areas compared to non-sanctuary jurisdictions. In fact, sanctuary polices correlate with reduced crime and increased employment. (<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-effects-of-sanctuary-policies-on-crime-and-the-economy/>)

Immigrants' Rights and CJC Values

- We respect the inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- We promote and affirm justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- We seek the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.
- We recognize that documented and undocumented immigrants work, pay taxes, and contribute to our community in multiple ways. Immigrants work in many low-paying jobs that US born Americans no longer want, for example crab picking on the Eastern Shore. Immigrant labor expands our economy on the local and national level.
- We see immigration as a human rights issue, supporting people who are escaping war, oppression, and poverty, just as many of our ancestors did.
- When immigrants feel protected, they are more likely to report crimes and otherwise cooperate with the police, making the entire community safer.